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ABSTRACT

Nine papers present either discussion of the issues or practical answers to the issues of nonstandard dialects, pidgins, and creoles in the classroom. They include: "The Case Against a Transfer Bilingual Program of Torres Strait Creole to English in Torres Strait Schools" (Anna Shnukal); "Summary: A Survey of Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Use of Tok Pisin in Community Schools in Papua New Guinea" (Joseph Alfred Nidue); "English in the Education of Speakers of Aboriginal English" (Ian G. Malcolm); "Kriol and Education in the Kimberley" (Margaret Mickan); "Teaching Initial Literacy in a Pidgin Language: A Preliminary Evaluation" (Jeff Siegel); "Reading Creole English Does Not Destroy Your Brain Cells!" (Ronald Kephart); "Teaching English to Kriol Speakers: The Kartiya Game" (Gary Ovington); "Educating Speakers of Caribbean English Creole in the United States" (Katherine Fischer); and "Summary: Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools: An In-Service Course for Teachers" (Joyce Hudson). (Contains chapter references.) (NAV)

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APPLIED LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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Pidgins, Creoles and Nonstandard Dialects in Education

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Pidgins, Creoles and Nonstandard Dialects in Education

Occasional Paper Number 12

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FOREWORD

Most of the contributions to this volume were first presented as papers in the workshop, 'Pidgins, Creoles and Nonstandard Dialects in Education: Issues and Answers', held at the 16th Annual Congress of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia at James Cook University in October, 1991. The aims of the workshop were to examine the question of using pidgins, creoles and nonstandard dialects within formal education; to discuss this question from different academic perspectives: linguistic, sociological, and educational; and to take a more practical look at already established programs using these varieties of language.

The papers in this volume fall into two groups: first, those discussing some of the issues involved, and second, those describing some practical answers. The first paper by Shnukal takes up the arguments for and against using Torres Strait Creole as a formal medium of instruction, concentrating on the attitudes of Torres Strait Islanders. The summary of Nidue's paper which follows indicates similar negative attitudes among Papua New Guinean teachers towards the use of Tok Pisin (the PNG dialect of Melanesian Pidgin) in primary schools. Malcolm's paper then discusses the use of Aboriginal English in the schools according to the traditional and a revised model of bidialectal education. Also in the Aboriginal context, Mickan's paper deals with the issues of Kriol in education in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Some preliminary answers about the use of pidgins and creoles in formal education are found in the second group of papers. Siegel reports on the initial results of a study which show that using Melanesian Pidgin to teach initial literacy in a preschool program has educational and social benefits and, contrary to popular attitudes, does not interfere with the acquisition of standard English. In the following paper, Kephart presents similar results from an earlier study done with Creole English in the Caribbean. Another kind of answer has to do with using creoles in 'awareness' programs in formal education rather than as languages of instruction. Awareness programs teach how creoles are legitimate languages, different from English, and concentrate on pointing out the formal and pragmatic distinctions. Referring to previous work on such

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programs with Kriol in Western Australia, Ovington's paper describes one successful teaching technique. The summary of Hudson's paper outlines an in-service course for teachers to make them more aware of Kriol. Finally, Fischer's paper describes an awareness program developed quite independently in America, but with teaching methods and positive results similar to those in Australia.

I would like to thank all the contributors and Libby Fitzgerald for her help in preparing this volume.

Jeff Siegel
Volume Editor

THE CASE AGAINST A TRANSFER BILINGUAL PROGRAM OF TORRES STRAIT CREOLE TO ENGLISH IN TORRES STRAIT SCHOOLS

Anna Shnukal
University of Queensland

ABSTRACT

The use of Torres Strait Creole (TSC) as an official educational medium in Torres Strait schools is opposed by almost every Torres Strait Islander, even those whose first language it is. Ostensibly purely an educational issue, the use of TSC in Islander education is, in fact, equally political, cultural and economic. Despite apparent sociolinguistic similarities and long-term unofficial de facto use of the creole as a bridge to English in outer island schools, the educational context in Torres Strait is not comparable with that of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu or the Solomon Islands, where sister languages are spoken. The paper argues that, by virtue of its origins, ownership, current sociopolitical associations and the fourth-world position of Torres Strait Islanders, any official policy of implementing TSC as an official medium of instruction would fail. However, it outlines a compromise policy, which would allow Islanders to continue to monitor and control the extent of creole use in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

This paper argues against the introduction of a formal transfer bilingual program of Torres Strait Creole (TSC) to English (E) in Queensland's Torres Strait island schools, where TSC is the children's first language on thirteen of the eighteen communities (including Bamaga and Thursday Island).

I should make it clear that I am not in any way opposed to the use of creoles in education, nor to the educational theory behind the proposals for a bilingual program. Nor do I consider TSC to be a corrupted or

debased form of English, linguistically deficient, or in any way unsuitable as an initial language of formal instruction. However, if we examine more deeply the question of its use in Torres Strait schools and the reasons for the Torres Strait Islanders' unanimous rejection of its formal introduction, it becomes clear that, at least at present, TSC constitutes a special case – one which is not comparable with its sister languages, Tok Pisin, Bislama and Solomon Islands Pidgin – by virtue of its provenance, ownership, current political associations and the place of Torres Strait Islanders as a fourth world population within Australian society.

TORRES STRAIT CREOLE

TSC, also known as Broken and Pizin, is one of four languages currently spoken in Torres Strait, the others being English and the unrelated indigenous languages of west and east, Kala Lagaw Ya and Meriam Mir, respectively.

One of two indigenized Australian English-lexifier creoles, TSC is the descendant of forms of nineteenth century Pacific Pidgin English, brought to Torres Strait by immigrant marine workers in the bêche-de-mer, pearling and trocchus industries. Creolized first on Erub (Darnley Island) and Ugar (Stephens Island) and then independently at St Paul's Anglican Mission, Moa Island, all de facto Pacific Islander communities, it has an eastern and a western dialect, influenced by the two indigenous languages. There are minor differences in lexicon, pronunciation, syntax and semantics (significant in proclaiming island affiliation), but the core of linguistic structure is shared.

The reasons for the adoption of the Pacific Island pidgin as a primary language and its subsequent creolization and spread are crucial to understanding its contemporary situation:

1. TSC indexed a new identity for the *apkas* 'half-caste' children of Pacific Islander and other immigrant fathers, who considered themselves superior to their "native" kinfolk and were favoured by the church and government.
2. TSC was believed to be English during the early contact years, when access to English was limited.

Its rapid regional dissemination, however, came about primarily because of its usefulness as a lingua franca between Eastern and Western Islanders, whose traditional contacts had been extremely limited. Moreover, until very recently, educational policy discouraged the use of the two indigenous languages by children, leading to their loss and replacement, not by English as intended, but by the creole.

DOMAINS AND EVALUATION OF TSC

The functional relationship between E and TSC in Torres Strait can be characterized as classically diglossic (Ferguson 1959) with E (*prapa Inglis* 'proper English') used for "High" functions: church, school, public official meetings, public speaking, public notices, letters, notes, invitations, hymns; and TSC (*Inglis blo nupla* 'our English') used for "Low" functions: jokes, humour, everyday conversations, pearling lugger songs. English is learned formally through instruction and felt to be alien to Islander thought and worldview, but it is almost always used in public official contexts or as written language. TSC, on the other hand, is "picked up, caught" and through it Islanders say "you can truly express yourself". Almost exclusively an oral language – Trevor West, principal of the Mabuiag State School in 1982, characterised his school as "bilingual but monoliterate" – it indexes the non-traditional, non-European context.

Over the past few years, attitudes to TSC have changed, as it is increasingly recognized as a language separate from English. Yet it continues to be viewed at one level as a kind of English, as can be seen by its names, Pizin Inglis, Broken Inglis (versus the "proper" English used by white people), and by the fact that its phonological, syntactic and semantic norms are those of English and that English words are its chief source of lexical innovation. It is decreolizing rapidly, yet this movement towards English is not considered to be in any way controlled by whites. Since it lacks those characteristics which are generally associated with a "proper" language: historicity, autonomy, norm codification and sanctioned use in media and education, it is characterised as *tok* 'speech' or *tang* 'tongue' rather than *langgus* 'language' and its native speakers are said to have "lost their language". Despite a recently devised orthography (Shnukal 1988), Islanders prefer to write TSC according to

English rules, thus "car-sa" for *kasa* 'for fun' and "them–pla" for *dempla* 'they'. One reason for this is the creole's lack of autonomy; another is dialect differences; yet another is resistance to ascertaining or fixing the language, since individual speakers take so much pleasure in manipulating it.

The negative evaluation of TSC held by older Islanders and most Europeans is typical of the creole context. TSC is stigmatized as an inferior type of English, a "rubbish language" but this attitude is far less apparent among young adults and children, who "own" it and for whom it is a marker of ethnicity and separateness from Europeans. Even those who denigrate it – and this includes native speakers – use TSC as a lingua franca to show Islander solidarity and to hide things from Europeans.

The question of ownership of the creole brings a new factor into play. Although indigenized and the regional lingua franca, TSC is not an indigenous but an imported language. It is owned (in the way that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are owned) by the Pacific Islander-descended people of Erub, Ugar and St Paul's Village, Moa, where it first creolized. These Islanders are recognized as speaking the most "stylish" varieties of TSC and other Islanders imitate them. However, this group of people has historically been the subject of envy and some mistrust because of their long association with Europeans and because they are generally believed to hold a disproportionate amount of political and economic power.

Moreover, the Torres Strait Islanders, unlike Papua New Guineans, ni-Vanuatu and Solomon Islanders, who speak a related creolizing language, do not control their political or economic destiny. They are a fourth world people, living as third world inhabitants of a first world economy. Thus, they are reluctant to accept the use of the creole as a formal medium of instruction in their schools, seeing it as a method of depriving them of instruction in the kind of English that white people use, and thus condemning them to permanent under-class status.

Schools quite properly serve the social order and from the beginning of schooling in Torres Strait in 1873, when the London Missionary Society established the first school on Erub, education has been viewed as a necessary adjunct to "civilization", imparting skills and knowledge necessary for finding a place and perhaps even advancing in a changing society. Of these skills, the most important have always been

English oracy and literacy. Acquisition of English has been and continues to be viewed as an instrumental strategy for obtaining access to European knowledge (embedded in language), technology and goods; English has always been the sole official medium of instruction in Torres Strait schools. One hundred years ago in 1891, the Government Resident on Thursday Island, in urging the appointment of a schoolteacher to Mer (Murray Island), articulated the government view that "literacy in English was the fundamental skill". Then, as now, lack of facility in English was seen as the major disadvantage in achieving educational success. Parents expect the schools to put their major effort into the teaching of English literacy and oracy; this is viewed as the proper role of the school. For Islanders, English represents power through options: the ability to speak and write English "like a whiteman" might conceivably provide an escape from the economic dependence of their parents and grandparents. Literacy is more highly valued than oracy and schools are viewed primarily as agents of literacy.

However, Islanders have consistently been assessed as having low levels of English performance. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? As Betty Murray wrote in 1989, outer island children learning English in Torres Strait:

> do not hear English spoken around them. There has been little expectation that they will learn to use English fluently, and children especially have few opportunities to use the language with native English speakers. In fact, the only place in the community in which they may regularly hear and speak English is the school, where it is, officially at least, the language of instruction.
>
> (Murray 1989:57)

It is paradoxically the concern about low levels of English proficiency, a major factor in poor school performance generally, which led to the first proposals for bilingual education programs using TSC and the indigenous languages, by Osborne (1979) and others towards the end of the 1970s and by Orr (1982) in the early 1980s. More recently Kale (1990) has advocated a transfer bilingual education program using the creole and English.

VERNACULAR LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

The initial impetus for the use of vernacular languages – later to include pidgins and creoles – in schools dates from the early 1950s, from the UNESCO (1953) recommendation that every child should be given at least initial education in her mother tongue. Both common sense and educational research support this general educational principle, but it was always qualified by practical (economic and political) considerations: cost; availability of teachers, teaching materials and codified norms; relative numbers of children; and the potential for political divisiveness.

In a 1975 paper, "Languages of education: how to decide", Ralph Fasold points out that the selection of languages of education is subject to what he calls the "rowing downstream" principle, a fundamental principle of language planning:

> The most successful language planning efforts seem to be those that are in concert with what society is doing or is prepared to do anyway. A language planning project which goes contrary to the existing social forces with regard to language is doomed to very limited success, at best.
>
> (Fasold 1975:2)

Fasold discusses four criteria to be applied when deciding among competing languages of education. These are not hierarchized, since there does not appear to be any principled way of ranking them and, moreover, Fasold claims that he "would expect it would almost always be the case that the four criteria would apply in concert" (Fasold 1975:5).

One criterion is FUNCTIONAL IMPORTANCE, the degree to which a language is attractive as a second language. Weinreich devised a formula for measuring functional importance: the proportion of speakers of one language who learn another language relative to the size of the populations of native speakers of the two languages. By this formula, TSC is indeed of high functional importance. As the lingua franca of Torres Strait, almost all speakers of both traditional languages learn it and the proportion who learn it has been growing historically since the 1920s. On this criterion, then, TSC, as the regional lingua franca, is of greater

functional importance in Torres Strait than any of its competitors, Kala Lagaw Ya, Meriam Mir or English.

Another criterion is the SIZE OF NATIVE SPEAKER POPULATION. For nations deciding on languages of education, languages with higher speaker populations would obviously be a more suitable choice than those with lower populations, other things being equal. Fasold does not elaborate but it is clear that he is referring to a proportion of the national population. Given that it is the Queensland government which has responsibility for educational language choice in Torres Strait, it is legitimate to ask which population figures educational planners should take into consideration when assessing size of native speaker population relative to base population. There are approximately 25,000 Islanders, of whom some 20% still live in the Strait and Cape region. Should these numbers be assessed relative to the total population of Torres Strait and the Cape only? the North Queensland education zone? or Queensland as a whole? One could make a case for all of these.

Another criterion is POTENTIAL FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT, which includes factors such as: an existing orthography and its suitability to printing technology; already existing educational materials; a written literary tradition; trained teachers. Under this criterion, TSC gets a passing grade on the first and last factors (though note the reservations about orthography referred to above), but fails on the second and third factors. Economically speaking, we might have reservations about this criterion, since providing educational materials from scratch can be expensive.

Using these three criteria, the creole begins to look like a serious candidate for choice as a language of instruction in Torres Strait schools. It has high functional importance, potential for language development and a relatively large population of native speakers, although development potential and speaker population are problematic.

However, an equally important criterion is GROUP PREFERENCE and here the choice of TSC becomes even more problematic. It is worth quoting Fasold (1975:4) at length:

> It is a strange phenomenon in the sociology of language that the native speakers of some languages may have such a low subjective evaluation of their native language that they may view government efforts to promote the use of it as a medium

> of instruction as an insidious attempt to limit their educational advancement by forcing them to be educated through a "bad" language. This tends to be particularly true of creoles ... In the UNESCO Report, the recommendation in such cases is that the government launch a propaganda campaign to convince the community to at least accept a pilot program of vernacular language education in that language in the hope that the result will be so good that the community will be willing to accept a total program of education through their language. But in the circumstance in which vernacular language education is not possible for everyone in any case, it would seem perverse to go to extraordinary efforts to convince a language group to accept the use of their language in education when they really do not want it. This, coupled with the fact that there is no guarantee that propaganda plus pilot project will succeed in convincing them anyway, seems to indicate that languages of which native speakers have low subjective evaluations be eliminated from consideration as languages of education.

This describes quite accurately the current situation in Torres Strait. Since Islanders would not, at least at present, accept a new role for the creole as a language of formal instruction, its choice is ruled out by the criterion of group preference.

However, low subjective evaluation is not the only or even the most salient factor in its lack of acceptability. Even more important is its association with the Pacific Islander immigrants and their descendants, currently the most economically and politically prominent in the region. It is that association and that context which distinguishes it from other Pacific pidgins and creoles.

POLITICS

TSC holds an ambiguous position, particularly among those old enough to have input into educational decisions. Given the decline of the traditional languages and the cultural values and knowledges with which they are associated, TSC is viewed by certain groups of Islanders as an

instrument of political domination. I am not referring here to the opinion that Europeans wish to impose the creole as a means of keeping Islanders in a subordinate position and denied access to the benefits of other Australians, but the view of many traditional Islanders that the local power elite (which controls the Island Co-ordinating Council and other European-style contemporary political structures in Torres Strait, and which is almost entirely descended from Pacific Islanders) is attempting to impose the creole on all Islanders. They see this a continuation of the struggle against Pacific Islander influence, which historically led to the expulsion of these men from several island communities. For Europeans now to advocate the formal adoption of TSC as a language of instruction, albeit for purely educational reasons, would be perceived as a continuation of the historical alliance between them and the Pacific Islanders, which allowed the latter to dominate numbers of Torres Strait Islander communities from contact until the early 1920s and their descendants to continue to dominate much of Torres Strait from the 1920s to today.

AMBIVALENCE

I have tried to suggest something of the ambivalent nature of the position of TSC vis-a-vis English and the traditional languages and it is this very ambivalence and connection with Pacific Islanders which, in my view, makes it a problematic choice as a formal language of instruction.

Islanders have a strong attachment to conservative practices, which are considered *prapa* 'fitting, appropriate'. Privileging the use of the creole in schools, rather than excluding it, would be a major change in educational practice and, significantly, one imposed and therefore controlled from outside the communities. This must inevitably lead to changes in other cultural practices involving the creole, which have evolved over the past hundred years and which are still evolving.

Such a change would be perceived as political rather than educational, intended to favour a particular group of Islanders at the expense of others, as well as to keep Islanders in general "in their place". The themes of unequal treatment of Islanders by Europeans figures largely in Islander discourse: as evidence, Islanders point to the inferior

quality of goods and services long provided to them. They will therefore be sceptical about the motives of those who advocate the introduction into their schools of what they perceive to be an inferior type of English as a language of formal instruction. And, without the full support and long-term involvement and responsibility of communities, there is no chance of successfully introducing an English-TSC transfer program into Islander schools.

A COMPROMISE

There is no community support for the formal introduction of TSC into the schools of the region. However, for decades there has been unofficial, informal use of the creole, especially in the lower grades, as a transfer strategy to English. This is countenanced by the communities as an instrumental measure of limited duration. I must stress that it is an oral strategy only and makes educational sense: to begin instruction in a second language (to both teachers and students) cannot produce optimal educational outcomes. Indeed, it has been argued that such a strategy produces only strategies for the avoidance of shame.

As an informal program, it is the Islander teachers themselves, usually first language speakers of the creole, who exercise control over the amount, extent, nature and educational purpose of the creole used in their classrooms.

A formal program, with a syllabus prepared by Europeans, would do violence to Islander concepts of what is appropriate to the school setting. It would also override a major recommendation made by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal teachers and counsellors as recently as October 1990, and reaffirmed a year later, that the Queensland Education Department "acknowledge and support each individual community's decisions regarding the language to be taught in its school(s)".

My suggestion is that the Education Department note and accept long-term successful educational practice in outer island schools, recognise that the children's language is not English (a recognition only recently won) and guarantee teacher and community control and consultation. It would make it clear to the community that the goals of the education program continue to be the acquisition of high order English

literacy and oracy skills. It would also provide additional assistance in the form of in-service teacher training to make explicit the major linguistic and pragmatic differences between English and TSC and the general cultural principles and world views which separately underlie the two languages. A useful model could be the Western Australian Catholic Education program being devised by Joyce Hudson (this volume), of which I was unaware when I first gave this paper.

CONCLUSION

Educational language choices are made in accordance with educational policy objectives within the framework of current educational and sociopolitical ideology. They tend also to be made at a physical and psychological distance from the communities in which they will be implemented, and by educators who will be little affected personally by the outcomes of their policies.

Although they are an aspect of wider government language planning policy, they are largely unrecognised as such. However, effective educational language choices must take into account a broad range of factors: educational, social, cultural, historical, economic and political. They will not succeed if they are made against community wishes, but often a natural accommodation will evolve when both sides agree on educational objectives.

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A SURVEY OF TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF TOK PISIN IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Joseph Alfred Nidue
University of Papua New Guinea

The primary purpose of this survey was to study the attitudes of teachers towards the use of Tok Pisin (TP) as a medium of instruction in lieu of English-only in the Community Schools in Papua New Guinea and to determine if there was support for such a change. Sixty-nine teachers answered a questionnaire consisting of 25 questions. The findings show that over 90 percent of the teachers surveyed were strongly in favour of retaining English-only medium schools even though they agreed that using TP would facilitate teacher-student communication, improve students' understanding of subject matter, enable parents to participate in their children's education and promote traditional cultural activities in the schools. The implications of these findings are that teachers, as guardians of knowledge, seem to believe that knowledge can only be transmitted through the medium of English and without English there is no learning.

A secondary purpose of the study was to determine if the prejudiced attitudes of the indigenous people, taught by colonial teachers and settlers, were still present today. This was also in response to the challenge made by some academics for a controlled survey of the indigenous people's attitudes towards TP, especially towards its use in education. The findings show that whereas in the past TP was regarded as "primitive", "non-scientific", "incapable of expressing complex ideas and processes" and labelled "a bastardized creation", "corrupt" and "broken", it now enjoys the new status of a national, official language and a language of inter-ethnic communication for all across ethnic, class, educational and provincial boundaries. It is deduced that this change of attitude may be due to TP now becoming a creole to thousands of speakers.

A third purpose of the study was to lay the groundwork for a more systematically controlled and quantitative study of teachers' attitudes

towards the introduction of a bilingual education approach in which TP and English are media of instruction. If the results indicate majority support for bilingual education, it would imply a major change in language education policy for schools in the National Education System for the year 2000 and beyond.

ENGLISH IN THE EDUCATION OF SPEAKERS OF ABORIGINAL ENGLISH

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Edith Cowan University

ABSTRACT

Australia is committed to the teaching of Standard English to Aboriginal people, and the bidialectal model has been the one most advocated by sociolinguists for such instruction. However, there is little evidence of commitment to bidialectal education among teachers of Aboriginal children. It is suggested that a reason for this may lie in the inadequate recognition of the relevance of contextual factors in the way bidialectal education is presented or interpreted. On the basis of evidence from teachers and Aboriginal people it is recommended that a functional model of bidialectal education be developed, based on a description of the entire communicative economy in which Aboriginal children participate.

INTRODUCTION

"English for all" has been made one of the major objectives of Australian language policy (Lo Bianco 1987:78). For those Aboriginal people who are "speakers of dialectal forms of English" this objective has been spelled out to imply:

> to acquire mastery over the more formal varieties of Australian English to enable them to function effectively throughout Australian society and to gain full access to educational and social opportunities.
>
> (Lo Bianco 1987:116)

There is, then, a commitment in the Australian language policy ensuring that Aboriginal people have mastery of standard Australian English.

There has never been an entire consensus among linguists that it is desirable to teach the standard variety to speakers of nonstandard English. Some have considered this objective unachievable because a condition for success would be that the nonstandard dialect speakers identify with the speakers of the standard variety, and, often that precondition is not met (e.g. Bryen Hartman and Tait 1978:23); others have argued that even if it were achievable, it would be socially divisive, if not offensive to the nonstandard dialect speaking communities (e.g. Sledd 1986); others again have argued that it represents an attempt to impose the standard of one class of society upon another (e.g. Lemke 1990).

However, it would be fair to say that the majority of voices within sociolinguistics, within nonstandard dialect speaking communities and within the wider community have supported the role of the schools in giving everybody access to the standard variety, in the hope (whether misplaced or otherwise) that that will also give access to the life opportunities of the society at large.

If the standard dialect is to be taught to nonstandard dialect speakers, then this can be done either in a way which excludes the nonstandard dialect from the educational process, or in a way which includes it. Sociolinguists have consistently argued for the latter approach, which may be referred to, in a general sense, as bidialectalism or the teaching of standard English as a second dialect (TSESD).

I would like in this paper to take a second look at the teaching of Standard English as a Second Dialect, with special reference to Aboriginal children, from the point of view of a sociolinguist. My interest is in the principles, developed from sociolinguistic theory, on which this educational innovation was based in the 1960s and early 1970s, and in the ways in which they, and their applications, have stood up to the test of time. On the basis of this review, I would like to suggest some future directions for the English education of children who are speakers of Aboriginal English.

THE BIDIALECTAL OR TSESD APPROACH

Sociolinguistically-based proposals for TSESD have been put forward in Shuy c.1964; Baratz and Shuy 1969; Fasold and Shuy 1970 and in many more recent sources (e.g. Bryen, Hartman and Tate 1978; Adler

1979; Wolfram and Christian 1989). A comprehensive review of the early developments in the field of bidialectalism and the potential for their application to Aboriginal contexts as seen in the mid seventies is given by Gardiner 1977. TSESD was seen as the alternative to "compensatory" education programs which had been promoted in the United States as a means of "enriching" the inadequate linguistic resources of nonstandard dialect speakers, and which, it was conceded, had been a failure. The approach, in conformity with linguistic theory, took nonstandard dialects seriously and suggested that in schooling, their speakers should be given specialist treatment, just as is the case with second language learners.

The approach was built on certain assumptions about nonstandard dialects, about Standard English and about pedagogy. Non-standard dialects were seen to be different from, but not deficient to, standard English. Their use, by their speakers, was seen to be acceptable in the classroom as a resource for learning. The teacher was to treat them with respect as the bearers of culture and identity for their speakers. Standard English, for its part, was seen by the majority as having an unquestioned role in the education of nonstandard dialect speakers. It should be both the object and medium of their instruction and of their evaluation. There was some, but not widespread, advocacy of dialect, or bidialectal, texts as an aid to the eventual goal of reading Standard English. Generally, though, the bidialectal movement was not greatly preoccupied with the development of learning materials.

Bidialectal pedagogy presupposed a basis of an accurate linguistic description of the first dialect as an input to the education process. A contrastive analysis of the first dialect and of standard English was advocated as enabling the development of appropriate language awareness activities and contrastive drills (Shuy, c1964). Linguistic and sociolinguistic principles were invoked as a basis for determining the sequencing of materials. In particular it was argued by Wolfram 1970 that the order of introduction of standard English features should be based on the criteria of: (1) social diagnosticity; (2) generality of the rule; (3) grammatical before phonological variables; (4) socially significant before regionally significant variables; and (5) relative frequency.

TSESD was seen as taking place in a "quasi-foreign language situation" (Stewart c.1964). The approach acknowledged the value of code-switching and (in oral reading) translation into the dialect, in the course of instruction. It was recognized that the heavy emphasis on linguistic form would be unmotivating for students who considered

themselves already to know the language, and interesting content was advocated as a counter to boredom.

Bidialectal education has been much advocated, but little researched (Adler 1979:128), and, if my spot-checks in Aboriginal Australian classroom settings have been representative, little practised, at least in a thoroughgoing way.

I get the feeling, both from my unfruitful inquiries, and from the literature, that there has been to some extent a loss of faith in the old educational sociolinguistic orthodoxy. This feeling was confirmed when I came across Viv Edwards' summing up of the field of dialect and education in Europe:

> Much of the research conducted in Europe and elsewhere during the 1970s and early 1980s drew on the insights of sociolinguistics, but it promised far more than we have been able to achieve...
> Although those who have tried to apply the insights of sociolinguistics have done so within the context of the 'linguistic difference' position, they have none the less accepted the need to teach the standard.
> The aims of these researchers have, in one sense, been extremely realistic. The alternative – equality of standard and nonstandard dialects within an educational setting (as articulated, for instance, in Trudgill 1975) - is more properly an item on the political agendas rather than pedagogical agendas and has no hope of acceptance in the foreseeable future. However, it can be argued that the various strategies that have been devised for teaching the standard – democratic or élitist – are no more realistic than calls for all language varieties to be given equal status in school. In spite of new sociolinguistically inspired attempts to help children acquire the standard language in Europe and beyond, we still await evidence of the efficacy of these approaches
>
> (Edwards 1989:320).

Assuming, then, that Edwards' and my misgivings are not unfounded, what has gone wrong? Why has not more change occurred in practice in accordance with the input of sociolinguistics?

AN EXAMINATION OF THE TSESD APPROACH

I propose to examine the three areas under which I listed the assumptions on which the TSESD is based: nonstandard dialect, standard English, and pedagogy, because I think what has gone on, or not gone on, has been affected by some other assumptions as well.

Attitudes towards nonstandard dialect

In their volume *Dialects and Education: Issues and Answers*, Walt Wolfram and Donna Christian (1989) pose themselves the question "Can anything be done to eliminate the inequities that are associated with dialect difference?" and begin their answer to it by saying:

> There are two possible ways of dealing with inequities due to dialect differences. One is to eliminate the differences between dialects; the other is to change the negative attitudes that are the source of the inequities. (Wolfram and Christian 1989:22)

I think that in the earlier work on the teaching of standard English as a second dialect, the sociolinguists and the educators did not take sufficient account of attitudes, those of the dialect-speaking communities, those of the members of the educational establishment, those of the political decision-makers, and indeed, those which were their own. They also did not take account of certain facts, some of which have become more apparent to us with the passage of time.

Often, where things have not changed, it has been because the people who could have facilitated change have been unconvinced that it was necessary. Let us take one simple fact about dialectal variation, and look at its implications for the attitudes of decision-makers. We know that the experience of dialectal variation is not constant across all levels of society. To quote Trudgill (1983:186):

> The greatest degree of regional differentiation is found among lower working class speakers and the smallest degree at the other end of the social scale, among speakers from the upper class.

Similarly, John Baugh (1987:235) has observed:

> There is ... an inverse relationship between social utility [by which he means utility in the wider social spheres of, for example, business, school and government] and the degree of linguistic style shifting within dialects. The standard varies the least from one situation to another, while nonstandard dialects show a wider range of variability.

In other words, those for whom marked dialectal and stylistic variation are an everyday experience are those least likely to be involved in educational decision-making. How can we expect the educational decision-makers to be convinced that dialectal difference is a problem in education? Intuitively, they are likely to perceive the problem as exaggerated. Or, take another linguistic commonplace, as expressed by Trudgill (1983:187):

> Most speakers of the (more or less regionless) Standard English dialect ... speak it with a (usually not too localised) regional accent, so that most educated people betray their geographical origins much more in pronunciation than in their grammar or lexis.

Speakers whose main experience has been with standard English are likely to be aware of differences in accent, but to have a less clear appreciation of differences in dialect, and may well dismiss dialect differences as matters of accent. Some years ago, in the course of a larger project, I was able to interview 129 teachers from all the main regions of Western Australia about their communication problems with Aboriginal children in their classes. (See Appendix, Table 1). I asked them a number of general questions, which we shall look at later, and I also went through the names of each Aboriginal child in their classes and invited them to comment on them from the point of view of communication. This way, I was able to obtain data, from the teachers' point of view, on 595 individual students. I asked the teachers to indicate for each child whether their English was standard or nonstandard. The responses I received are shown on Table 2 in the Appendix, differentiated

according to the regions of the State. It is clear that, apart from in the Metropolitan area, teachers considered that most of their Aboriginal students spoke nonstandard English, though, in the great majority of cases, this did not hinder its comprehensibility. But, when I asked them for the speech characteristics, I was given mainly phonological features. Even when I specifically asked for "words, phrases or grammatical forms", the commonest response was "dropping 'h'". Of the 129 teachers, not more than 12 agreed on any one grammatical feature which characterised the speech of their Aboriginal children. The teachers' responses are, I think, supportive of the view that, for many standard English speakers, dialect may be equatable with accent.

Another observation can be made about the fact that the most frequently reported speech feature was the dropping of "h". This is a feature which, no doubt, characterised the speech of the teachers as well, since it is not absent from standard English. However, in certain environments, it is a marker of nonstandard non-Aboriginal English, and, it could be argued that *that* is in fact what makes it salient to the teachers in characterising Aboriginal English. Teachers, then, along with other speakers of standard English, even when rather intensively exposed to Aboriginal English, may perceive it to be "just English", albeit nonstandard.

Meanwhile, among linguists, there is not even consensus that many of the varieties we refer to under the term Aboriginal English are rightly called English at all (see Eades 1985; Shnukal 1985). They are separated from standard English by pervasive features of phonology, grammar, semantics and speech use. Increasingly, the dialect is claimed by Aboriginal people as their own (see, e.g. Hampton 1990), and, as Harkins (forthcoming) has said, "Their aim [with respect to English] is not 'native-speaker competence' if that means speaking like a white man."

Non-standard varieties, by virtue of their very lack of standardization, enable their speakers to develop a virtuosity not afforded by standard varieties. Baugh (1987:237), in his studies on black vernacular English observed that it accommodated to a greater degree of linguistic style shifting than did standard English:

> Although style shifting is common everywhere, nonstandard speakers exhibit a greater degree of linguistic variation, that

> is, when compared to the standard. Some of my informants were able to master standard English, such that listeners from different social backgrounds judged their recorded speech to be "white". Other informants would shift toward the standard in formal situations, but strong traces of their nonstandard vernacular were preserved, so that they were judged to be black regardless of the formality of their speech.

Among Aboriginal people I have found the same variation. An example of the first kind of informant listed by Baugh would be Victor Hunter, who recorded a conversation with me which has been reproduced in the tape and appendix accompanying *English and the Aboriginal Child* (Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm 1982). A qualified teacher and a spinner of amazing yarns in Aboriginal English, he argues "there is a place in society for both forms" (p.238). As a child, he said, "standard English was for speaking to teachers, adult whites and my immediate adult relations, whilst Aboriginal English was [for] speaking to my peers" (p.237). As an adult, in Aboriginal contexts, he enjoyed using Aboriginal English because, as he said, "it is far more expressive and goes hand in hand with gestures and facial expressions ... and also ... I feel personally that it gives one a sense of identity and belonging." (p.237) Speakers of Aboriginal English, like other speakers of nonstandard dialects, "have additional stylistic options" (Baugh 1986:87). The variety spoken in Alice Springs is described by Harkins (forthcoming) as:

> characterised by a wider range of syntactic and semantic possibilities than standard English has, and by some lexical differences. Far from being a restricted language variety, it is expanded by virtue of the fact that its speakers can and do call upon all of the linguistic resources at their disposal, including semantic and syntactic structures derived from Aboriginal languages.

There are many references in the literature to the existence of a range of stylistic levels in Aboriginal English and Creole. For example, Alexander (1968:vii) in her study of Woorabinda Aboriginal English, noted:

> It was found that the informants spoke a variety of Australian English when conversing with the Field Worker or in school, but used the sub-language of Aboriginal English when conversing among themselves.

Readdy (1961:47), studying South Queensland Aboriginal English, reported of an informant:

> [speaking of the children's speech on her tape] this was the way he used to speak as a child, and said that though the speech was that of young boys, it had value to him in recalling the past. To use his own phrase, it belonged to "the old times of coaches, bullock waggons and droving.

Liberman (1982:35) has recorded the use of English and Pitjantjatjara among Aborigines of the Western Desert to express what he calls "congenial fellowship", or "enjoying each other's company". A range of adjectives are used by Aboriginal speakers to distinguish between varieties recognised or used by members of the speech community, including "light", "loose" (F. Wordick, personal communication, Roebourne), "soft", "heavy" (Harkins forthcoming), "flash", "posh", "strong", "pure", "straight", "high", "easy", "simple" and "slack" (Kaldor and Malcolm 1991:70). Caroline Blumer (personal communication), in work in progress among Aboriginal speakers of English in the Kimberleys, has discovered a continuum of lects in use, ranging from a basilect, close to Kriol to an acrolect close to standard English. Her data show that different members of the community control a different range of lects, some as many as twelve. One person, recorded speaking with 17 different people, covered 10 lects. The process of relating the use of the lects to social variables has still to be carried out, but it is apparent that complex factors are involved. For example, one woman employed the most basilectal variety in talking with her mother, a mesolectal variety in talking with her husband and with the researcher, and an acrolectal variety when talking to a child. This, perhaps corresponds to the evidence we have from Victor Hunter that parents may seek to get children to employ standard English.

There is ample evidence of linguistic versatility and dexterity among nonstandard dialect speakers. This is often masked from standard speakers by the fact that their speech carries "mixed signals" (Baugh 1987:237). An interesting case in point is reported by Ben Rampton, who was teaching British Asian schoolchildren and, over a period of 9 months, noted every instance of their use of "Me" rather than "I" at the start of sentences (e.g. "Me too clever", "Me no play gym.") Rampton (1985:192-3) analysed the occurrences with due regard to contextual factors, and arrived at the tentative conclusion that:

> this "me" construction is often functioning to tone down the force of speech acts which either challenge the authority of a superior or claim superiority over an equal; and it achieves this precisely because the construction denotes linguistic incompetence, and hence, by implication, low status. If you reject something the teacher says, you make the challenge much less grave if your syntax is also saying "but look, I'm only little", or "I can't do much". Equally, you are less likely to offend a mate when you tell him that you are seven sums ahead, if the grammar of your sentence signals "But never mind, I'm still a fool".

A similar case among Aboriginal people is instanced by Harkins (forthcoming).

The ability to use nonstandard dialect, then, has advantages to its users, of which standard speakers may be unaware. This applies also to what Baugh (1987) has called "the paradox of linguistic loyalty". The prestige of linguistic varieties is subject to "ethnographic relativity", in that the nonstandard dialect speaker is moving between two contexts of acceptance.

> Most of my childhood black peers [he writes] were openly hostile to standard English, and boys who chose to speak the standard were usually called "sissies" or worse. Standard English was held in low regard, and those students who rejected black speech in favour of the standard were accused of being "Uncle Toms". (Baugh 1987:236)

In view of this, some (e.g. Lemke 1990; Sledd 1986) have argued that teaching standard English as a second dialect may in fact be harmful, because it is aiming at alienating people from their group.

Summing up what I have said about attitudes to nonstandard dialects, there is need for bidialectalists to do a lot of rethinking. Even their own assumptions as sociolinguists may have underestimated the systematic relationship of the nonstandard dialect to the speech economy of which it was a part, both from the standpoint of the wider community and from the standpoint of the dialect speakers.

Assumptions about standard English

What about their assumptions about standard English? By and large, the value of teaching standard English is assumed by the proponents of bidialectalism. Standard English is the goal for all: nonstandard dialects are, if not the obstacle in the way of it, then the only means available to help their speakers to get to it. When educational problems arise, then maybe interference from the nonstandard dialect is the problem, so more contrastive drills may be called for. But, in a way, this puts everything upside down. Robert Le Page (1981:25) has said:

> Children do not make "errors" in using their own language, because each of us in fact ... creates our own rules. It is in trying to approach more closely the rules of a model group, a prestige group, that we may make "errors".

We need to recognize that standard English is in fact "the problem", and to look more closely at the standard English we are expecting these students to master and ask what kind of standard English and why.

One of the things that makes standard English a problem is it doesn't quite fit the world the Aboriginal learners are coming from. Graham McKay (1991), in describing the early development of the School of Australian Linguistics which was set up in the 1970s to train Aboriginal linguists in the Northern Territory, noted "a certain tension within the School program between an Aboriginal culture which is non-literate and a western education system founded on literacy skills". The same theme has been pursued by Michael Christie (1990) and by Brian

Gray (1990). The latter has argued that the "literacy-oriented culture" of which our schools are a part focuses attention from the earliest years on "what the words say" rather than on what is going on in the life setting. It is very difficult to get Aboriginal children to suspend their contextual focus in order to carry out decontextualised operations with words. I learned this to my dismay when attempting to get Aboriginal children, as a part of a research project, to carry out negative transformations on the basis of a model provided to them on a tape. I eventually had to give up after experiences like the following (of which this is just a short extract):

Taped voice:	"They play football. They don't play football."
I.G.M.:	Now, I said "they play football", and what did she say?
Tommy:	They don't play football.
I.G.M.:	Yes. Now listen to the next one.
Taped voice:	He can play basketball. (pause)
I.G.M.:	Now, what would she say after that?
Tommy:	Um she play ba- basketball all night then
I.G.M.:	Yes... but if I say "he can play basketball" and she thinks that's wrong, what would she say? (pause) She'd say...?
Tommy:	The the this... she say... she say she say I'm playin' with it and that nother feller took it off 'her an' she took it off 'im.

Standard English comes from the base of a literacy-oriented culture and is biased towards decontextualised expression.

There was, or appeared to be, in early bidialectalism, an assumption that if you give two people the same linguistic forms you will bring about effective communication, but this was itself a product of a decontextualised view of language. Kellner (1972:81) has put it well, from a Meadean perspective:

> An equivalent language disposition and usage by two or more individuals does not furnish them automatically with a mutual understanding of their given context. This rather depends on first establishing the rapport on the basis of a 'reciprocity of perspectives' in terms of an intersubjective

> intentionality or as G.H. Mead has put it, in terms of 'the taking of the role of the other', before language comes to play its important mediating function in these processes.

Language not only has the power of uniting but also of alienating, of "deflating the vernacular speaker's self-image" (Baugh 1986:90) and reinforcing negative attitudes.

Another sometimes neglected dimension of the understanding of standard English is that it too comprehends many varieties. If we are to teach standard English, the question arises: what standard English? Some Aboriginal people have asked for "straightforward English" (Thieberger 1991), some for plain English, some for "secret English" or "big English" (Martin 1990:34) which will give them access to the structures of the wider society. These are questions which a realistic bidialectal education must face.

Pedagogy

There is also a good deal more to explore with respect to pedagogy, and the whole educational enterprise than was anticipated in early bidialectalism. What is the appropriate role of the student? Where does what is done in the classroom relate to life? Sister Theresa Ward, of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School in Port Keats, recounts how, when she first came to be involved with Aboriginal teachers in a bilingual program, she found that these teachers, on the basis of their own schooling, initially had a quite different perception of reading from her own:

> Many of the Aboriginal teachers thought reading was calling out words as they appear on paper. To many of them, the idea that words were meant to make a story was completely new... After talking to them about their school experience of reading, it became clear that many thought reading was learning the pages of the *Bush Books* or other readers off by heart... Looking back, they realised that the main purpose of their reading lessons was to please the teacher...
>
> (Ward 1982:45)

Bidialectal skills are not an end in themselves, yet educators may convey to students the impression that they are. They may not even, as Sledd (1986:66) has urged, be a means of upward mobility in society:

> Holding out false promises of... mobility in the mainstream, the bidialectalists tried to alienate black youth in urban ghettos from peers and parents by teaching them to talk and write like the middle class whites whom they disliked and feared.

The failure to make learners aware of the social consequences of their situation, as a part of their education, was observed by Michelle Fine as a process operating in the New York City public high school where she carried out ethnographic research. She called this phenomenon "silencing". Although standard English might have held the key to the future of students whose social situation was similar to that of the teachers, it would make no difference to the future of many others on whom it was imposed. Yet the school maintained the illusion. According to Fine (1987:83):

> At the level of curriculum, texts, and conversation in classrooms, school talk and knowledge were radically severed from the daily realities of adolescents' lives and more systematically allied with the lives of teachers... Routinely discouraged from critically examining the conditions of their lives, dissuaded from creating their own curriculum, built of what they know, students were often encouraged to disparage the circumstances in which they live, warned by their teachers: 'You act like that, and you'll end up on welfare!' Most were or have been surviving on some form of federal, state or city assistance.
> Good students: managed these dual/duel worlds by learning to speak standard English dialect, whether they originally spoke black English, Spanish or Creole. And more poignant still, they trained themselves to speak and produce in two voices. One's "own" voice alternated with an "academic" voice which denied class, gender and race conflict;

reproduced ideologies about hard work, success, and their "natural" sequence; and stifled the desire to disrupt.

What is called for in the context of Aboriginal Australia is not English for conformity, but English for "critical consciousness" as advocated by Freire (Sledd 1986:67). Increasingly, this is the message coming from Aboriginal people. As Mandawuy Yunupingu of Yirrkala put it, in advocating a "both ways" curriculum, "if you have control over both languages, you have *double power*" (1990:5).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I believe that many of the original objectives and approaches of bidialectal education are still valid. However, I do not see it as achieving its goals unless it becomes more socially relevant, and more in tune with the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people. To some extent, I think the data from the teacher interviews I was talking about earlier can show us the way. If we examine Table 2 a little more closely, we can see that it reveals five main features which, according to the teachers, characterise Aboriginal children's communication:

1. It is problematical in terms of SPEECH USE, rather than LANGUAGE.
2. It is inhibited INSIDE but not OUTSIDE.
3. It is viewed in terms of RES[ONDING rather than INITIATING.
4. It shows INEXPLICITNESS rather than EXPLICITNESS.
5. It shows a PUPIL-PUPIL orientation rather than a PUPIL-TEACHER orientation.

Now, these observations are interesting for what they say about the pupils and their communicative strategies, but that is not what I want to focus on here. Rather I want to focus on what the teachers *notice* about the situation. I hope the significance of this will be apparent when we observe the results of another survey I conducted.

In the course of the same study, I interviewed 26 Aboriginal adults in various areas of the state on the subject of the language and communication problems they had experienced or observed in the school. The results are shown on Table 3 in the Appendix, differentiated

according to the regions of the state from which the respondences came. We can, I think, abstract from the comments given four basic communicative concerns which underlie the behaviour of Aboriginal children in the classroom, according to the respondents:

1. UNFAMILIARITY with teacher and school environment and expectations.
2. IRRELEVANCE of the content of schooling.
3. FEAR of being made conspicuous or judged wrong.
4. INCOMPREHENSION of teacher language.

When they look at communicative problems in the classroom, teachers and Aboriginal respondents focus on quite different aspects of the situation. The teachers are focused on the nature of the communication of the children: how much they said, and how well they said it. The Aboriginal respondents, on the other hand, are focused on who it is they have to talk to, what they are expected to talk about, who is watching and might cause them embarrassment if they say the wrong thing, and what they don't understand. Put another way, the non-Aboriginal teachers are concerned with message form, and the Aboriginal respondents are concerned with context. So we are back to what Gray was talking about: the decontextualised perspective of the non-Aboriginal as against the contextualised perspective of the Aboriginal.

It is interesting to compare these results with those obtained by McInerney (1989) in a survey of views of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parents in five regions of New South Wales. Asked "What do you suggest schools should do to help (your) children do better at school?", the Aboriginal parents opted most strongly for "more Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal curriculum", and "encouragement", whereas the non-Aboriginal parents gave stronger support to "more individual help and individual programs" and to improving curriculum, teachers and facilities (p.62).

Bidialectal education has become associated, in some of its presentations, with what Labov (c1964:94) called "a theory of mechanical constraints":

> How is it that young people who are exposed to the Standard English of their teachers for twelve years cannot reproduce

> this style for twelve minutes in a job interview? The problem is parallel to the more serious question as to how a student can sit through eight to ten years of school without learning to read more than a few words. Those who feel that they can solve this problem by experimenting with the machinery of the learning process are measuring small causes against large effects. My own feeling is that the primary interference with the acquisition of Standard English stems from a conflict of value systems.

There are problems in implementing a bidialectal education which is based on an inadequate view of function and meaning of *both* dialects in the lives of their users. We have got it wrong insofar as we, the educators, unlike the Aboriginal people themselves, have had a blind spot with respect to context. I believe that the way ahead lies in a unified model of bidialectal education based on the idea of one composite speech (or communicative) economy and multiple means of speech. The terms, of course, come from Hymes, and I believe that his concept of ethnography of communication makes a good starting point for the development of such a model (Hymes 1968; 1972; Malcolm 1991).

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APPENDIX

Region of WA	Schools visited	Teachers interviewed	
Metropolitan	1	4	Creole influence
South-west	5	35	weakest
Gascoyne/ Murchison	7	28	↕
Pilbara	9	46	Creole influence
Kimberley	6	16	strongest
Total	28	129	

Table 1: Distribution of teacher interviews

Table 2: Teacher questionnaire
Responses of greatest frequency

	Metro	South west	Gascn Murch	Pilb	Kimbl	Total	%
(N° of teachers	4	35	28	46	16	129	
What are your main problems in communicating with Aboriginal pupils?							
A) The pupils' nonstandard dialect						61	(25.1)
1 single word utterances		2	2	4		8	13.1
2 indistinct articulation	1	1	2	1		5	8.1
3 pronunciation of particular phonemes	2	1	1			4	6.5
4 use of slang	1	2				3	4.9
5 Their recognition of particular phonemes	1		1	1		3	4.9
Other						38	62.2
B) The pupils' speech use behaviours						138	(56.8)
C) The pupils' classroom adjustment						33	(13.5)
D) The pupils' health problems						11	(4.5)
Which Aboriginal children's speech is nonstandard	33%	65%	80%	78%	95%		
Which Aboriginal children's speech is barely comprehensible		2%	4%	5%	4%		

	Metro	South west	Gascn Murch	Pilb	Kimbl	Total	%
(N° of teachers	4	35	28	46	16	129	
What are the most notable characteristics of Aboriginal speech in the classroom?							
1 Greater pace of utterance	1	5	3	15	1	25	9.8
2 Dropping 'h'		10	4	1		15	5.8
3 lack of clarity - slurring, words run together		5	1	4		10	3.9
4 Dropping consonants		2	2	4	1	9	3.5
4 Brevity ('Abbreviated', 'short-hand')			3	5	1	9	3.5
Other						187	73.5
Can you give me any typical words, phrases or grammatical forms?							
1 Dropping 'h'		7	3	6		15	6.2
2 Substitution of 'he' for 'she', 'him' for 'her'				12		12	5.0
2 'ana' or 'ini' tag		8	4			12	5.0
4 -fella suffix			4	6		10	4.2
Other						190	79.6
How do the Aboriginal children most readily communicate in the school room							
1 Always spoken English (t all)	1	20	16	10	7	54	44.6
2 Actions, signs, vocal noise (to teacher, at least)			5	10	3	18	14.8
3 Preference for vernacular (to classmates)				13	3	16	13.2
4 Mixture of English and vernacular (to teacher and others)		1	4	7	2	14	11.5
Other						19	15.7

	Metro	South west	Gascn Murch	Pilb	Kimbl	Total	%
(N° of teachers	4	35	28	46	16	129	
Have you noticed any difference between the Aboriginal children's speech out of the classroom and in the classroom?							
1 More confident, uninhibited outside		4	8	6	3	21	21.2
2 Louder, more noisy outside		5	7	3	3	18	18.1
3 No (unqualified)		3	3	4	3	13	13.1
4 More vernacular outside			3	5	4	12	12.1
Other						35	35.3
Do the Aboriginal children indulge in any form of language play?							
1. No (unqualified)		6	6	4	4	20	16.8
2. Name-calling			1	10	3	14	11.7
3 repeating words, or sounds for pleasure		2	1	6		9	7.5
4 Rhyming (for fun or to tease)		2	3	1	1	7	5.8
Other						69	58.0
How do you cope with the problem of an Aboriginal child's speech being incomprehensible to the rest of the class?							
1. Ask the child to say it again		3	2	3	2	10	12.0
2 Repeat the response back to the child/class		2	2	6		10	12.0
3 Ask the child to speak up		2	2	3		7	8.4
4 The class amy tell me what has been missed		2	2	2		6	7.2
Other						50	60.0
What do you do when you don't understand?							
1 Ask the child to repeat		6	9	7	8	30	20.0
2 Ask the class, or another child		5	8	9	6	28	18.6

	Metro	South west	Gascn Murch	Pilb	Kimbl	Total	%
(N° of teachers	4	35	28	46	16	129	
3 Ask again		6	1	12		19	12.6
4 Accept help offered from the class		2	1	5	1	9	6.0
Other						64	42.6
How do you know when an Aboriginal child doesn't understand what you say?							
1 Child fails to respond to elicitation	1	4	10	6	4	25	13.7
2 Child looks blank, vacant, vague		7	5	8	4	24	13.2
3 Child does the wrong thing		2	8	6	2	18	9.9
4 Child makes a clarification request		7	5	5	1	15	8.2
Other						100	54.9
Do you adjust your speech for Aboriginal children? How?							
1 No (unqualified)		19	6	15	3	43	28.6
2 Yes. Simplify		7	6	5	6	24	16
3 Yes. Reduce pace		4	4	9	3	20	13.3
4 Yes. Include Aboriginal/ Pidgin/slang expressions			4	3	4	11	7.3
Other						52	34.6
Do you ever use Aboriginal English or vernacular forms in the classroom? When? What forms?							
1 No (unqualified)	1	28	12	17	8	65	50.0
2 Yes. Isolated features, incidentally		2	4	3	1	10	7.7
3 Generally no		1	3	1	2	7	5.4
3 Yes. Words elicited from children, where relevant		1	3	2	1	7	5.4
Other						41	31.5
Communicative problems							

Table 3: Aboriginal interviews
Responses of greatest frequency

	South west	Gascn Murch	Gold-field	Pilb	Kimbl	Total
(N° of interviewees)	4	5	1	12	4	26
of Aboriginal pupils						
A) Adjustments						
1 Parents may not require child to attend		1		2		3
2 child takes time to get to know the teacher				2		2
2 Child's lack of interest in school				2		2
3 School's lack of Aboriginal cultural content					2	2
2 Traditional moral values not reinforced					2	2
2 Parents may feel the school robs them of children's respect		1		1		2
2 Community may lack understanding of what school is doing				2		2
2 Social handicaps	1			1		2
B) Speech use problems						
1 There are no restrictions on Aboriginal children's behaviour in the camp				2		2
1 An Aboriginal child may not be able to talk freely with a white person		1		1		2
1 Aboriginal children are afraid of giving an answer that may be wrong				2		2
1 Aboriginal children will not repeat answers for fear of being wrong				2		2
C) Language problems						
1 Teachers use 'big words'	2	2		2	1	7
2 Influence of 'station pidgin'					2	2
2 Bilingual background causes linguistic instability					2	2

	South west	Gasen Murch	Gold-field	Pilb	Kimbl	Total
(N° of interviewees)	4	5	1	12	4	26
Reasons for communicative withdrawal						
1 Shyness	1	3		4		8
2 Embarrassment, self-conscious reaction to being looked at		2		1		3
3 Fear of giving a wrong answer		1		1		2
3 Inability to talk the language well		1		1		2
3 Unfamiliarity with rules and fear of offence				2		2
3 Laziness		1		1		2
3 A normal pattern of behaviour with Aboriginal children		1		1		2
Strategies for coping with speech use problems						
1 Talk to the children nicely, do not boss too much	1	3		1		5
1 Do not try to force a response		1		4		5
3 Hand the unresponding child over to the Aboriginal Aide	1			3		4
4 Insist on participation, for a while				3		3
Strategies for overcoming language problems						
1 Bilingual education		1		3		4
2 Use of Aboriginal language with individuals and small groups		1		3		4
3 Use of Aboriginal language, or style, by Aides	1	1		1		3
3 Inclusion of Aboriginal language forms in teacher speech		1		2		3
3 Use of Plain English with pupils by teacher				2	1	3

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KRIOL AND EDUCATION IN THE KIMBERLEY

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ABSTRACT

This paper begins with a brief look at the history of Kriol in education in the Kimberley. It then indicates some current directions the West Australian Ministry of Education is taking which is having some influences on teaching in the Kimberley. Some teachers faced with the problems of communicating with Kriol-speaking children are making efforts to implement strategies for overcoming this barrier. These are briefly discussed, mainly in the form of a case study. In conclusion, it looks at issues facing the Ministry of Education and Kriol speaking children in the Kimberley.

INTRODUCTION

At the completion of a survey in the Kimberley region, Western Australia (WA) in 1979 by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (Sandefur and Sandefur 1980:31-37), it was confirmed that Kriol (an English-based creole) is spoken in this area. In 1983 *Grammatical and Semantic Aspects of Fitzroy Valley Kriol* by Joyce Hudson was published, and also in that year the first Kriol literacy specialists with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) began work in the Kimberley. As a result of these factors, and the on-going work in the use of Kriol and in distinguishing it from English, there is a growing awareness amongst non-Aboriginal people of the existence of this "hidden" language, and amongst Aboriginal people that it is a *bona fide* language. I have lived in the Kimberley since 1984 working in Kriol literacy both at Halls Creek and Derby, and this paper is based mainly on my observations and some involvement in teaching, visits and conferences during that time.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On my arrival in the Kimberley in 1984 there were two schools where some Kriol work was being done. Both schools were non-Ministry of Education schools. Yiyili Community School (south-west of Halls Creek) became established as an independent school because the community wanted to have a say in the education of their children and wanted their own language included in the curriculum. It was established that Gooniyandi was the language of older residents while Kriol was the children's language. The "languages" program was begun, in which English was spoken by the teacher in the main classroom, Kriol awareness was conducted in a second area and Gooniyandi was used in a third, thus helping to establish that the three languages were different. Kriol awareness activities with the older students included giving English definitions of Kriol words to discover the differences in meaning. Past tense in English is a difficult grammatical feature for Kriol speakers to learn, so work was done with the Kriol past tense indicator *bin* and the English equivalents. Since then, the "languages" program has not been conducted consistently. There was a change in direction when the emphasis was on students reading and writing Kriol, and also several periods when Kriol and Gooniyandi were not a part of the curriculum. The greatest cause of discontinuity has been the changing of non-Aboriginal staff. They have been either unaware of the school's language policy or, if they were, unable to implement it due to unavailability of Aboriginal staff.

The other school was Ngalangangpum School at Turkey Creek, north of Halls Creek, which was established and run by Catholic Education. An experimental program using Kriol, conducted with the lower primary children, had a brief life. It was discontinued when the school employed a linguist and there was a push for the use of the traditional language Kija.

CURRENT DIRECTIONS

The Ministry of Education is at what I will call the "recognition stage" in relation to Kriol. It is generally agreed that many children are not speaking General Australian English (GAE, also referred to as Standard

Australian English), and there is a continuing concern about the level of English literacy skills amongst students. Although not all Kimberley Education staff are willing to acknowledge Kriol, SIL Kriol literacy workers have had limited discussions with Kimberley district superintendents and staff of the Ministry of Education. There has also been opportunity to present, at in-service sessions for teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs), some basic information about Kriol, such as its status as a language, and some phonemic, lexical and grammatical materials.

Town schools, whose student population is made up of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, face difficulties in both determining and dealing with the variety of languages used, as Kriol, General Australian English, and other forms of English are all likely to be used by different students. Possibly some will also have some knowledge of at least one of a number of traditional languages. In a visit to a town school, I discussed with the students themselves whether they spoke Kriol or not. Some said, "Everyone talks Kriol", others said, "No-one talks like that", while others said, "We use it just for fun". These comments seem to confirm the variety of languages used, but they could also be interpreted as the variation in attitude, towards Kriol in particular.

Kriol is, in the main, a language "hidden" from non-Aboriginal people. If a teacher or principal were to ask AEWs or parents if any of the students speak Kriol, the answer would probably be in the negative. Previous to a school visit I made this year, the principal had asked the AEWs whether they spoke Kriol and their response was "no". Yet as we discussed aspects of the Kriol language one of them commented that he spoke it in certain situations and with certain people.

Why is this? Firstly, many people are not familiar with the name "Kriol", "Pidgin English" often being used instead. Secondly, Kriol is an identity language, one which affirms Aboriginal identity with fellow-Aborigines, and which is used only sometimes with non-Aboriginal people who have been accepted and who have some grasp of Kriol. Thirdly, Aboriginal people will use English, or their best approximation of it, to communicate with non-Aboriginal people or strangers. Furthermore, Kriol is not always distinguished from the traditional language, as I found with a number of people when I visited two different communities.

Negative attitudes surface when it is suggested that Kriol be used outside its natural domain of informal communication, e.g. in school, church or meetings where both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are present, but where it would be helpful for communication. Some have said that to use Kriol in these situations is "taking a step backwards", or, "the *gardiya* (white man) wants to keep control over Aboriginal people". The connotations of these statements are, firstly, that the white man is withholding from Aboriginal people knowledge and power by not teaching/using English, which is the language of power. Secondly, the use of Kriol may be felt to be a "put-down" of Aboriginal people. There are also those who do not regard Kriol as a language. It is therefore not surprising that some Kriol speakers do not like to admit to speaking Kriol.

There is another barrier to teachers identifying the speech of their students. By the time students have been at school for a couple of years they have developed enough "school English" to survive, and to give the "appearance" that they speak English, except for a few telltale indicators such as *bin*, the Kriol past tense indicator, or the nonstandard usage of prepositions. This "school English" meets their needs through part of their primary school years, but does not cope with the abstract language and concepts needed to complete upper primary and secondary schooling. Cummins (1981:9) stated that a child moving to an English speaking country from a non-English speaking country takes 1-2 years to grasp conversational (survival?) English and 5-7 years to develop in the area of abstract language and concepts. These figures could also be applied to Aboriginal students, particularly those living in Aboriginal communities. An experienced teacher in the area commented about the time factor, "My teaching experience and general observation is that it takes longer for many, if not most. The truly multilingual are exceptions!" (E. Coghill, personal communication, 1991).

The WA Ministry of Education has made some positive moves towards coming to terms with the language situations of students in Kimberley schools. Firstly, and most important, it is recognising that students are not speaking GAE. Secondly it is placing teachers with experience in Kimberley schools as advisory teachers in the District Education Office. These teachers, having experienced communication problems in the schoolroom, have been instrumental in having me talk with district superintendents, principals and teachers about the languages

of Kimberley children. Thirdly, on the local level, schools, along with their communities, have been given greater autonomy in the use of school funds and also in decision making in relation to curriculum adaptations in their school. As a result, I have been invited by several schools to identify and report on the children's language. This also enables schools to respond to such community requests as teaching traditional language in the school.

These developments, and no doubt others, led this year to the introduction in the Kimberley of an English language program called "First Steps". This program, though not designed specifically for Aboriginal students or for teaching them English as a second language, has been, and continues to be, adapted so that it will serve this purpose.

Besides "First Steps" some teachers, especially those working with "heavy" Kriol-speaking students, have developed their own strategies, and adapted others from the Northern Territory to help separate the two languages and develop the use of both. Currently this involves teachers from only one primary school and several preschools. AEWs decided how they would refer to the two languages in the classroom. "Kriol" and "English" are used with older students and *Blekbalawei* and *Gardiyawei* (Kriol terms for the two languages) are used with the younger children. From pre-school onwards, the teachers and AEWs help make their students aware that there are two different languages by discussing the idea with the children, setting aside certain areas for the use of each, reading stories and singing songs and presenting different learning activities in each. The teacher is the model for GAE, and the AEW takes the leading role in conducting the Kriol sessions.

CASE STUDY

Following is a case study of Joshua, a nine year old student in Year 4 who attended the above-mentioned primary-school. This information is given by his teacher (T. Bywaters, personal communication, 1991):

> Joshua has experienced speech difficulties since pre-school. He has received some assistance from the Regional Speech Pathologist. Joshua's speech was described as "double-tongue" by his peers. Whilst the children and AEWs could

understand most of his speech, the teaching staff had considerable difficulty.

Joshua spoke very quickly, with poor articulation and little command of English... He often sought the assistance of the AEW to clarify the instructions and explanations of the teacher... I had much difficulty understanding Joshua's speech...

During daily news-telling sessions last year, most children used Kriol to a moderate to large extent. With the introduction of black and white hats to help the children differentiate between the languages, some children continued to choose the black hat to speak Kriol whilst others chose the white hat to speak English. Joshua was always keen to tell news, and chose the white hat most often. His news, however, was extremely slow and laboured. His initial efforts of "I went shop and I went river and I went back ..." were corrected at the point of error, which the children knew to expect if they chose the white hat. [NB: Modelling of correct GAE is encouraged rather than correction of children's speech. For this teacher and student it appears to have been a helpful exercise.] Joshua became very aware of previously omitted words such as "the" and "to" and his confidence as an English-speaker grew. Noticeable changes in Joshua's speech occurred quickly. Joshua's very positive attitude to learning was a major factor in his improvement.

... Newstelling sessions this year have seen a shift away from the use of the Kriol hat.... Whilst Kriol is recognised and valued in the classroom, the children seem to want to take the opportunity to practise their English during news time. As the children's English has improved, the differences between Kriol and English have been accentuated, thus their recognition and command of both languages has improved...

Code-switching activities with an AEW and a teacher have been conducted once a week to reinforce the distinction between the two languages, and their appropriate usage in the wider community. These activities were introduced to the classroom at the beginning of 1990. [NB: These refer to changing from one language to another, choosing and using

> the language most appropriate to each simulated or real-life situation.]
>
> The need for Kriol/English code-switching activities in the classroom is considerably less this year than last year. All but one or two children can confidently code-switch, although some self-correct frequently. The other children are keen to help in the correction of other children's speech.
> Joshua has developed significantly in all areas in the last eighteen months. His improved speech and resultant confidence are likely to have encouraged this development... He comprehends teacher's instructions without difficulty, and...his interpretation and completion of tasks is almost always correct and neat...
>
> When questioned about the language he uses at home, Joshua replied "Kriol". He stated that he used Kriol in the playground, and English in the classroom, "but Kriol sometimes". When questioned about the language he used last year in the classroom, he replied "Kriol". He said that he knew only a "little bit" of English last year. His responses were without hesitation.
>
> I believe that Joshua's awareness of his [growing?] bilingualism has been a vital factor in his recent social and academic development.

A Speech Pathologist, K. Patrick, also consulted with Joshua, firstly in August, 1990. The assessment summary stated:

> Joshua is speaking Kriol. Within this language he has a mild articulation disorder...Joshua is not able to speak in Standard Australian English.

In November, 1990 the Speech Pathologist reported:

> ...Joshua's expressive and receptive language skills in Standard Australian English have greatly developed, though still below age-norm. [NB: Refers to Kimberley students learning English as a second language.]

In March, 1991 the following, final assessment was made:

> *Articulation:*
> Typical Aboriginal phonological profile demonstrated.
>
> *Expressive Language:*
> Spoke in mostly Standard Australian English during this session...
>
> *Literate Skills:*
> Reading and writing at a Year 2 level. Phonological system interfering with spelling.
>
> *Summary:*
> Joshua has made great gains with his Standard Australian English language skills - skills are now within normal limits.

Whilst it may not be necessary with most languages to differentiate between a person's first and second language because the differences are very obvious, there is a need when these languages are Kriol and English. I have met students both in primary and secondary schools who have not differentiated between English and Kriol, and consequently were having difficulties in learning GAE. It is important to differentiate between the two languages because most of the lexical items of Kriol have an English base, but in Kriol many have taken on different meanings or have a slightly different emphasis. It is easy to assume that the meanings in both Kriol and English are the same, but it is at this point that confusion and miscommunication can occur, and make learning more difficult for the students. Some Kriol-speaking children, when riding in an airconditioned vehicle commented *Tu kol! Tu kol!*, meaning 'pleasantly cool'. However, when a teacher, seeing some Aboriginal children shivering in the classroom asked, "Are you *too cold*?", couldn't understand why they said "No!" In fact they were very cold, not pleasantly cool. There are also grammatical and phonological differences which lead to confusion and miscommunication.

ISSUES

A number of issues arise from this case study, from other observations I have made in this paper, and from my visits to some schools. These issues need to be closely examined and addressed by Kimberley educators.

1. I question whether Kriol, and the varieties of Kriol and English, have really been accepted as the *children's language*, and is therefore important to them. On school visits children have been excited to hear stories in "language" (referring to Kriol), often commenting, "You talk language!". Understandably on the parents' part, they want their children to learn their traditional language and English. They may recognise that Kriol is for communicating but do not see it as the children's first language. They may need help to perceive Kriol as a valuable language to help their children learn General Australian English rather than as a threat to their traditional languages.
2. I have had some students ask to learn to read Kriol. This is possible through such avenues as electives.
3. While the Ministry of Education is using and developing "First Steps" to cater for teaching English as a second language, there are some important questions to be asked. How much is known about the children's first language? Has the children's language been analysed so that their language may be referred to appropriately? Are the children explicitly informed and helped in understanding that they are learning English at school, and that their own language is good and appropriate to use in many situations? The sociolinguistics of Kriol need to be considered along with the answers to the above questions.
4. An aspect the Speech Pathologist's report raises is that teachers need to be aware of phonological differences between English, Kriol and Aboriginal languages so that appropriate strategies can be used to teach the sounds not in the children's own languages.
5. Two principals I have spoken with this year have returned to schools where they had previously taught within the last ten years. Both commented that students' language had changed and that they were now speaking less General Australian English than

previously. No doubt there are a lot of reasons why this has happened. One is increased mobility between communities, and the "language learning" that takes place as part of communication. Possibly principals and teachers are more aware and "tuned-in" to the children's language. In one school in particular I found that teachers were accepting of the children's language, but did not know how to develop their GAE. Has GAE in fact been taught? Is it the lack of differentiation between GAE and Kriol that has caused the problem? Does it also reflect on the part of Aboriginal people a desire, albeit unconscious, to have their *own* language which reflects their Aboriginal identity?

6. In the case study, Joshua, in a year, made tremendous progress in learning GAE. However, there is a danger that the following false assumption may be made: the student is speaking mainly GAE in the classroom, therefore he has grasped it all. A possible consequence of that misapprehension is that students may not learn any more than "school survival" English. Where and when are they to learn the abstract language and concepts which will help them to complete secondary and tertiary studies?

While recent directions and developments within the Ministry of Education allow for some optimism, these issues need to be seriously considered. Are the children being set up for failure? What are the consequences of their own language being ignored in the classroom? When Kriol is accepted as a language that may serve both teachers and students in education, "and when education serves the student within his/her cultural *modus operandi*" (E. Coghill, personal communication, 1991), many of these issues will be on the way to being resolved.

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TEACHING INITIAL LITERACY IN A PIDGIN LANGUAGE: A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the question of whether teaching initial literacy in a pidgin language will cause significant interference problems in the subsequent acquisition of the pidgin's lexifier language. It surveys the literature on the use of pidgins and creoles in formal education and then presents the preliminary results of an evaluation of the "Tok Pisin Prep-school Program" in a district of Papua New Guinea. This program uses Melanesian Pidgin English to teach initial literacy to children before they enter the English-medium government primary schools. The preliminary findings show that primary school students who have learned initial literacy in Melanesian Pidgin actually show higher academic achievement in English, as well as in other subjects, than those who have learned initial literacy in English. The "prep-school" program appears to be successful according to other, non-academic, criteria as well.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I will present the preliminary results of a formal evaluation of some aspects of a pre-school program in Papua New Guinea which uses Tok Pisin (the PNG dialect of Melanesian Pidgin English) to teach initial literacy. First, however, I will give some background to this study and a brief survey of other programs using pidgin or creole languages in education. Then I will describe the program being evaluated and give the preliminary findings of the study. Finally, I will make some tentative conclusions.

BACKGROUND

Vernacular education programs, especially the teaching of initial literacy in the mother tongue, have been increasing in number throughout the Pacific region, even though one of the eventual goals of nearly all island education systems is still the acquisition of English. Most Melanesian countries, however, have not been part of this trend, mainly because of their staggering linguistic diversity–more than 80 separate languages in the Solomon Islands, 100 in Vanuatu and 800 in Papua New Guinea. Using the mother tongue to teach initial literacy is especially difficult in urban areas of these countries, where 30 students in one class may speak 30 different languages.

Because of this diversity, it has been suggested that Melanesian Pidgin should be used as the next best thing. It is learned by urban children in Melanesia at a very early age and is certainly more familiar to them than English, and closer in semantics and structure to their mother tongues. But many Melanesian educators and administrators have strongly opposed the use of Melanesian Pidgin in their formal education systems. While they may support the use of indigenous languages in the schools, they believe that Melanesian Pidgin, as an English-lexifier pidgin, will "spoil the children's English". In other words, they fear that learning in what they consider to be merely a nonstandard variety of English will interfere with the later acquisition of standard English. As a result, initial literacy is taught only in English in the Solomon Islands and only in either English or French in Vanuatu. In Papua New Guinea, teaching initial literacy in indigenous languages is increasing rapidly (Faraclas 1989), but it is still taught in English in all urban areas and Tok Pisin is not yet officially used in any government schools in the country.

To a linguist, it seems that teaching initial literacy in Melanesian Pidgin should not cause any significant problems. First, many studies show that only a minority of errors in second language acquisition result from interference (Ellis 1985:28-29). Second, other studies show that literacy skills learned in one language can be easily transferred to another language (Cummins 1983). Third, studies of bilingual programs, such as the one at Milingimbi in Australia's Northern Territory (Gale et al 1981), show that initial instruction in an indigenous or minority language has no detrimental effect on the later acquisition of English. But could the

effect of learning initial literacy in a pidgin (or creole) be different from that of other kinds of languages? Surprisingly, no clear answer to this question is found in the literature.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

First of all, only a few reports exist of pidgins and creoles being used officially in formal education. (Of course, their de facto use is probably quite common, as pointed out by Craig 1977:323.) Although calls have been made for the use of English-lexifier Caribbean creoles in education both in Caribbean countries (Devonish 1983, 1986) and in Caribbean immigrant communities in the United Kingdom (Richmond 1986), evidence that these calls have been heeded is hard to come by. However, some reports do exist of creoles being used in formal education systems in other areas. These can be divided into two groups based on how the creole is actually used: (1) in an "awareness" program or (2) as the medium of instruction. Some of the goals of awareness programs are to give students basic sociolinguistic knowledge about creoles and nonstandard varieties of language in general and to make them aware of systematic differences, both formal and functional, between their own language and standard varieties. The result is often an increase in linguistic self-esteem, greater ease in domain separation and a more positive attitude towards learning the standard variety for use in particular domains. To my knowledge, such awareness programs exist in two areas–Western Australia, with Kriol (Hudson 1984; Hudson & Taylor 1987; Mickan 1992) and Evanston, USA, with Caribbean Creole English (Fischer 1992). As a medium of instruction, French lexifier creoles are used in formal primary education in Haiti and the Seychelles (Bentolila 1987; Chaudenson 1989; de Rieux 1980). The only equivalent use of an English-lexifier creole appears to be at Barunga (formerly Bamyili), Northern Territory, Australia, where Kriol is used in bilingual program Murtagh 1982; Sandefur 1986).

Second, reports of formal evaluations of educational programs using creoles are even fewer. In Haiti, Bentolila (1987:82) noted that the results of evaluations done in 1983-84 showed that "linguistic competence in both creole and French remained mediocre", but no details were given. In the Seychelles, Bickerton (1988:3) reported that students

who had Seselwa (Seychelles Creole) as their medium of instruction scored better results in school than those who had not. He concluded: "The prediction by the enemies of creole that education in creole would lower scores in English and French has failed to be borne out." But by far the most rigorous formal evaluation has been of the Kriol bilingual program at Barunga. In a cross-sectional study, Murtagh (1979, 1982) used several measures of oral language proficiency in Kriol and English to compare students in the first three grades at Barunga with those at Beswick Reserve, who speak Kriol but have an English-only school. The overall results showed that students at the bilingual school scored significantly higher, especially in Grade 3. However, we cannot conclude that this program is successful on the basis of such educational criteria alone. Social and cultural criteria must also be considered, such as the goals and aspirations of the teachers, parents, children and the community as a whole. From this perspective, the program has not been successful because a large number of people at Barunga are not happy with it, preferring either traditional Aboriginal languages or Standard English to be taught (Northern Territory Department of Education 1988).

Reports about the use of pidgin languages in formal education are much rarer. Papua New Guinea appears to be the only country where established programs exist to teach literacy in a pidgin language, but, as already mentioned, not in government schools. Rather they are in technical and vocational schools run in Tok Pisin by church groups (Siegel, forthcoming). Another program is the *Kisim Save* Tok Pisin Literacy program which has been in existence since 1970, but outside the formal education system. However, one quite remarkable use of a pidgin language is in more advanced formal education in another country. Bislama, the dialect of Melanesian Pidgin spoken in Vanuatu, is the subject of study and medium of instruction for a BA degree unit taught at the University of the South Pacific, *Introdaksen long Stadi blong Bislama* (Crowley 1987a,b,c). With regard to formal evaluations, however, none exist for any of these programs. This fact was the major impetus for the study I am now going to describe.

THE TOK PISIN PREP-SCHOOL PROGRAM

In 1989 I began a research project to find out more about the use of pidgins and creoles in education. At that time I heard about a preschool

program in Papua New Guinea using Tok Pisin to teach initial literacy. It is run by Pacific Island Ministries in the Ambunti District of the East Sepik Province, and called the Tok Pisin "Prep-school" Program. I began corresponding with the coordinator, Edward Wiruk, and arranged to visit him in Ambunti to find out more about the program. We then decided to carry out the formal evaluation of the program which is now in progress.

Before presenting the preliminary results of the evaluation, I will give some information about the Papua New Guinea (PNG) education system and the area involved in the program. Children in PNG usually start their formal education at the age of 7 or 8. Most attend the local "community school"–that is, the government-run school. The medium of instruction from Grade One at all community schools is English. Education is not free or universal, and parents must pay school fees, which is no easy task for the majority in Ambunti District who are subsistence farmers. The district straddles the Sepik River southwest of the provincial capital of Wewak. As there are no roads in the district, it is accessible only by travelling up the river or flying into the airstrip at the district centre. The area covered by the program is mainly along the river and its tributaries, but it also extends out of the district and up to the Sepik Plains area below the Prince Alexander Mountains. It is approximately 150 kilometres from east to west and 70 from north to south. There are more than a dozen separate indigenous languages spoken in the area but knowledge of Tok Pisin is widespread. It is learned by most children at an early age simultaneously with an indigenous language or as a second language.

The program began in 1985 in the district centre of Ambunti with one school and an enrolment of 150 students. In 1991 there were 22 schools and 960 students, spread throughout the area just described. The aim of the program is mainly to prepare children aged 5-6 for the community schools. However, some functional literacy is also taught to older students in places where there is no community school. Students attend for one or two years and learn initial literacy in Tok Pisin as well as initial numeracy, basic health, crafts, religion and other subjects.

The Prep-school Program is a community based one. A village asks for a Prep-school to be set up by forming a committee and sending a representative to Pacific Islands Ministries (PIM) who then do a feasibility study. If the village is found suitable, the committee must then

get permission from the head teacher of the local community school, provide one or two people with some primary education to be trained as teachers, provide land for the school and build the classroom. PIM trains the teachers and provides basic equipment and teaching materials, usually cyclostyled or screen-printed in Ambunti.

THE EVALUATION

We decided to evaluate the program according to both socio-cultural and educational criteria, using ethnographic, survey and formal comparative data. The ethnographic research consists of unstructured interviews with community school teachers, village committee members and parents in which they are asked to give their general opinions about the program. The teachers are also asked to describe any differences between students who have gone through the Prep-school program and those who have not, in terms of adjustment to school, learning ability, participation and cooperation. Furthermore, in light of the predictions of interference made by senior educators and administrators, teachers are also asked a specific question about the effect of having learned initial literacy in Tok Pisin on the English of the former prep-school students. In addition to this ethnographic research, teachers' opinions and attitudes are also being surveyed by questionnaires and information is being gathered on yearly numbers of students and on drop-out rates.

The formal comparative research involves comparing the educational achievement of students who have gone through the prep-school program and those who have not. It is common in research of this type to use established educational or psychological tests to measure this achievement. However, since these tests are often culturally inappropriate, and since we are interested in studying success or failure of the program according to community attitudes, we decided to use locally familiar and accepted criteria: namely community school term test results. These tests are supposed to be held at the end of each of the four terms in the school year. (However, in practice they may be held at the end of only two or three terms.) Marks are given in three subject areas: English, Mathematics, and General Subjects (health, social science, etc.). In comparing the term test results of "ex prep" students (who have gone through the prep-school program) with those of the "no prep" students

(who have not gone through the program), there are three research hypotheses:

H_0 there is no difference between the two groups

H_1 the marks of the "no prep" students are significantly higher than those of the "ex prep" students, especially in English (the prediction of many Melanesian educators and administrators)

H_2 the marks of the "ex prep" students are significantly higher than those of the "no prep" students

Of course, if we are trying to test the effectiveness of using a pidgin language to teach initial literacy, there are a lot of problems with this experimental design, most of them having to do with extraneous variables. For example, one or two years of extra formal education would clearly give students an advantage, no matter what the language of instruction is. And parents who send their children to the prep-school are obviously concerned with their children's education and may give them more support. So in analysing the results of this research, we have to keep these factors in mind. We also have to look at the comparative results from upper grades because we may be able to assume that the effect of extra initial schooling may be neutralized over time. However, if we are looking primarily at the whether or not we can reject H_1, as we are in this preliminary report, then the design presents fewer problems.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The gathering of data by interviews and questionnaires is still in the early stages. So far, six community school teachers have been interviewed and four have completed questionnaires. Their comments are that the "ex prep" students are well-adjusted, cooperative, and quick at learning. They are more active in participation in class have better attendance records. With regard to English, the teachers report that there are no interference problems except sometimes in spelling. They say the "ex prep" students are actually faster in learning English than the "no prep" students. The same is true for Mathematics, but not so much for General Subjects. Several teachers said that the Prep-school Program makes their job easier. Of the three head teachers interviewed, the two from "bush schools"

(small schools outside the district centre) were extremely favourable in their comments. The head teacher from the Ambunti Community School, however, was not so impressed. He said that the Prep-school Program helps the students when they first come to school, but after one or two terms, the other students catch up. Interviews with parents and committee members are still being analysed in detail, but generally all comments about the program have been favourable.

Figures have been compiled on the number of prep-schools established since the beginning of the program and on the yearly enrolment figures.

Year	No. of schools	Approx. no. of students
1985	1	150
1986	1	240
1987	1	130
1988	5	300
1989	12	650
1990	14	700
1991	22	960

Table 1: Growth of the Tok Pisin Prep-school Program

At this stage of the research, figures on drop-out rates and term test results have been analysed only for the Ambunti Community School and only up to the end of 1990. There are many problems with gathering these figures because some results have been lost and some teachers have left the school without leaving their records behind. Sufficient results are available so far only for two "streams" of community school students:

Stream 1: those who began Grade 1 in 1988
Stream 2: those who began Grade 1 in 1989

For Stream 1, records are available only for 1988 and 1990 (Grades 1 and 3); the 1989 records are missing for this stream. For Stream 2, records are available for 1989 and 1990 (Grades 1 and 2).

Drop-out rates for the "no prep" students in both streams were higher than those for the "ex prep" students, as shown in Table 2 below:

	No prep		**Ex prep**	
Stream 1 (1988-1990)	7/23	(30.4%)	2/16	(12.5%)
Stream 2 (1989-1990)	18/31	(58.1%)	4/14	(28.6%)

Table 2: Dropouts at the Ambunti Community School

	No prep		**Ex prep**		**t score**
	N	*mean*	*N*	*mean*	
English					
Grade 1 (1988)	21	10.57	16	16.75	-3.65*
Grade 3 (1990)	15	31.67	11	41.54	-2.61**
Maths					
Grade 1 (1988)	21	6.81	16	11.38	-2.93*
Grade 3 (1990)	15	14.67	11	21.45	-3.09**
General Subjects					
Grade 1 (1988)	21	9.24	16	14.00	-3.35*
Grade 3 (1990)	15	21.27	11	26.45	-2.25**

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$

Table 3: Stream 1, 4th term results

For the present formal comparative research, the fourth term test results in all three subject areas were compared for the "no prep" and "ex prep" students in the two streams. Table 3 shows the results for Stream 1 and Table 4 the results for Stream 2. Note that results given are the average test scores, not percentages. Because the tests are not standardized, the possible number of marks varies from subject to subject and from year to year. (As these are not relevant to the analysis, they are

not given here.) The t-test was used to see if there were any statistically significant differences between the scores of the two groups. (In later stages of the research, more rigorous statistical tests will be used, such as multivariate analysis of variance.) The present results are that in both streams the "ex prep" students scored significantly higher ($p < .05$) than the "no prep" students in all three subjects, including English, in Grade 1. In Stream 1, the "ex prep" students continued to score significantly higher in all subjects in Grade 3. In Stream 2, they continued to score significantly higher in English and Maths in Grade 2.

	No prep		Ex prep		t score
	N	*mean*	*N*	*mean*	
English					
Grade 1 (1989)	30	18.20	14	25.93	-2.98*
Grade 2 (1990)	13	11.85	7	14.00	-2.13**
Maths					
Grade 1 (1989)	30	11.40	14	18.14	-3.38*
Grade 2 (1990)	13	10.00	7	13.86	-2.83**
General Subjects					
Grade 1 (1989)	30	11.50	14	17.93	-3.13*
Grade 2 (1990)	13	12.46	7	14.29	-2.08

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$

Table 4: Stream 2, 4th term results

CONCLUSIONS

These preliminary findings allow us to make some tentative conclusions. First, the fear that learning initial literacy in Tok Pisin will interfere with the subsequent acquisition of standard English appears to be unsubstantiated. Community School teachers report that students who have gone through the Prep-school Program actually do better in English than those who have not. This is confirmed in the preliminary analysis

of the formal comparative research: both the null hypothesis and H_1 can be rejected in that the "ex prep" students scored significantly higher, not lower, in English (and in Mathematics and General Subjects) than the "no prep" students.

The higher academic achievement of the students who have gone through the Prep-school Program may be the result of several factors. Beginning formal education in Tok Pisin is of course one possibility. Many sources, such as the 1953 UNESCO report on the use of vernacular languages in education (UNESCO 1968) have emphasized the educational, social and psychological benefits of starting school in a familiar language. In this case, however, two extra years of formal education may obviously be a more important factor. But the results showing that the "ex prep" students continue to outperform the "no prep" students in their second and third years in the community school, may indicate that it is not merely the length of extra time which is significant. These results also do not confirm the one head teacher's view that the students who have not attended the prep-schools quickly catch up with those who have.

With regard to criteria other than academic achievement, the Prep-school Program seems to be successful. There is a greater participation rate and a lower drop-out rate among the "ex prep" students in the community schools. Teachers find their job easier when dealing with the "ex prep" students because they are cooperative and quick learners. Comments from parents and community leaders as well as the rapid increase in the numbers of schools and students clearly show that people view the program quite favourably.

Of course, more detailed research is necessary before firmer conclusions can be reached about the success of the Tok Pisin Prep-school Program. However, one advantage of a program such as this is already clear: its feasibility. Because it is community-based and in the medium of a widely known local language, it does not require highly educated staff or expensive educational resources which are beyond the means of the communities involved. So while English-medium pre-school programs may arguably give similar results, they would simply not be possible under present circumstances in most areas of Papua New Guinea. Whether programs similar to this one would be relevant for other Melanesian countries as well may become evident when this research is completed.

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READING CREOLE ENGLISH DOES NOT DESTROY YOUR BRAIN CELLS![1]

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a small-scale research project undertaken in Carriacou, West Indies, from 1982 to 1984. The aim of the research was to discover whether learning to read their native Carriacou Creole English (CCE) would help children learn to read standard Metropolitan English (ME). A group of junior secondary school children, age 12, was given access to their native language as a part of their language arts program. A control group of similar children continued their usual program centred on Metropolitan English. The two groups were tested regularly in ME to determine whether reading in Creole might help. The results showed that reading Creole neither confused nor impaired the children's reading of standard English, as predicted by some educators. While it was not possible to prove conclusively that reading Creole helped in reading English, the enjoyment and enthusiasm displayed by all children in reading the Creole materials implied that West Indian children should be allowed to read and write Creole as part of their language arts programs.

PROLOGUE

In the summer of 1979, while I was in Carriacou collecting linguistic data, a visiting North American asked me what I was doing. I said I was writing a grammar of Creole English as spoken in Carriacou. The North American began a seemingly endless tirade against nonstandard varieties of English in general, and creole[2] varieties in particular: West Indians

have no business speaking their own kind of English, let alone people in a small place like Carriacou; you can't express yourself precisely or accurately in creole; children should be taken away from their creole-speaking parents at birth and placed in standard English speaking homes, because if they spend their whole lives speaking creole their brain cells will deteriorate!

This may sound amusing, but it isn't. In state-level societies the educational process is one of the means by which people are sorted for the kinds of roles they will play in the society. Those who succeed will join the elite or near-elite, or at least have the opportunity to do so, while those who fail will join the ranks of those who are exploited and discriminated against within the society. One of the most important ways access to education is controlled is through language. Far too many people harbour similar notions about creoles and other nonstandard varieties of language. Many, like this North American, are university educated. While not all ideas are as bizarre as these, the stated and unstated attitudes toward creoles held by those who plan and carry out educational policies in the West Indies have a profound effect on the quality of education experienced by children in creole speaking areas.

THE SETTING

Carriacou is one of the Grenadine islands, and is politically affiliated with Grenada. The language situation there is quite complex.[3] The native language of all people born and raised in Carriacou is what I am calling Carriacou Creole English (CCE), a local variety of Lesser Antillean Creole English with strong similarities to some West African varieties (see e.g. Todd 1974). Carriacou people themselves usually refer to it as *Brókn Inglish* (Broken English). It is rarely used officially in school and almost never (with the exception of the Project I am about to describe) encountered in print.

A variety of Lesser Antillean Creole French, locally called *Patwa*, is known as a ritual language of Nation and folk songs by many young people; it is not, however, spoken fluently by them. The last generation of people who learned Creole French as a first or co-first language is in its sixties or older.

In addition to the two creoles just described, two forms of standard English can be found in Carriacou. A local variety of Standard West Indian English, spoken from Belize through the Antilles to Guyana, is known by some. The prestige variety of English as prescribed by the metropolitan power, and which I shall call Metropolitan English (ME), is the official language of Grenada and is the language of schooling. It is heard over the radio (e.g. BBC News) but most importantly it is the language of virtually all written material encountered by Grenadians, including the externally set exams which determine their success or failure in school. It is never taught as a foreign or semi-foreign language.

In this kind of situation, language is the key to access to higher levels of education. How creole speaking children fare in educational systems dominated by ME can be seen by examining their performance on the English Language exams. These were formerly set in England and had absolutely nothing to do with West Indian language or culture. During the 1960s the pass rate was around 20 to 30 percent (Craig 1969). From 1974 through 1978, the pass rate for children in Trinidad and Tobago averaged 22 percent (Republic of Trinidad & Tobago 1978). Of course, these figures represent only those children who reach the point of being able to take the exams, not the population as a whole. This means that far fewer than 20 percent of West Indians manage to pass a test on what is supposed to be their native language! Ironically, many manage to pass other exams, such as Scripture or Maths, sometimes at the same sitting. But it is the English Language exam which is the most required for desirable employment and advancement.

Recently, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) has taken over the construction of external exams for the West Indies. While there does appear to be more focus on West Indian culture, the emphasis on Metropolitan English has not changed significantly.

Beginning in 1979 and continuing into 1983 the Revolutionary Government of Grenada was actively seeking ways to improve the language arts educational experience for Grenadian children. This paper describes a small-scale research project undertaken in Carriacou at the request of the Ministry of Education (for a more detailed description see Kephart 1985). The stated aim of the research was to discover whether learning to read their native Carriacou Creole English (CCE) would help children learn to read Metropolitan English (ME). A group of junior

secondary school children, age 12, was given access to their native language as a part of their language arts program. A control group of similar children continued their usual program centred on Metropolitan English. The two groups were tested regularly in ME to determine whether reading in Creole might help. It should be added that this research, which I came to call affectionately the Carriacou Literacy Project, was very small-scale and in marked contrast to the more flashy Marryshow Readers program, which barely got started and then was ended by the Coup and U.S. intervention of late 1983. The two approaches were quite different and I will contrast them when appropriate.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Several theoretical considerations formed the underpinning to the Carriacou project. First was the view of reading as an active, holistic, psycholinguistic process involving interaction between readers and print for the purpose of extracting meaning (see e.g. Goodman 1970; Spiro et al 1980). The assumption is that readers bring all they know, conscious or not, about the language being read, the subject matter, and their other world experiences to their reading. As they read, fluent readers use all of this to construct hypotheses of the meaning of the print. They continuously accept, reject, or refine these hypotheses based on what they encounter on the page.

According to this model, reading as a skill is not language specific. Spanish speakers, for example, read Spanish in the same way that English speakers read English (Hudelson 1979). The skill of reading is somewhat analogous to the skill of playing a stringed instrument in that once you learn to read one language you don't have to learn to read again, although of course you do have to learn something about the next language you want to read before you can read it (Harrison 1966). It stands to reason that the native language, being the one people know the most about and the one in which much of people's world view is formulated, ought to be the easiest one to achieve initial literacy in. For children in Carriacou, that would be Creole English.

Once the decision was made to give children access to literacy through Creole English, the next problem was how should it be written. The Marryshow Readers used traditional English orthography and stressed, at beginning levels, sentence patterns shared between Creole and ME; I consider this to be a *minimizing* approach, i.e the differences between Creole and ME are played down. I already had evidence that children understood that there were two "English" systems operating in Carriacou (Kephart 1983) and in 1980, for my masters thesis, I had written a grammar of CCE which showed that there are significant differences between it and ME at all levels of analysis. For most of their history, creoles had been ignored completely (when not actively repressed!) in education and I felt the minimizing approach was too close to the ignoring one. So I rejected traditional orthography and its stepsister, eye-dialect, in favour of a phonemic spelling system that would really make Creole look like the different language variety that it is and that the children who speak it know that it is. I call this a *maximizing* approach, one that recognizes and takes advantage of the differences between Creole and ME for pedagogical purposes.

The desirability of a phonemic orthography is not simply a matter of taste (see for example Pike 1983; Sapir 1949). A writing system which exploits the phonemic (and morphophonemic) levels of language is the most efficient possible, because it takes advantage of the fact that human language is composed of a small (usually 20-40) number of meaningless sound units (phonemes) which are combined and recombined to form meaningful utterances (words, sentences, speeches, etc.). Thus people learning to read phonemically need learn a small number of symbols, which they can recombine endlessly to write anything they want.

One argument against use of phonemic orthographies, advanced by some linguists, is that a phonemic orthography blocks acquisition of reading at more "abstract" levels, i.e. whole-word, sentence, and paragraph. This appears not to be the case, however, since Spanish speakers read Spanish, which is written relatively phonemically, in the same way English speakers read English orthography, which is notoriously non-phonemic.[4]

For the Project, I used a modification of an orthography designed for my masters thesis; this orthography is given in Figure 1.

a	[a]	**ay**	[ay]	**b**	[b]	**ch**	[tʃ]	**d**	[d]	**e**	[ɛ]
é	[e]	**ey**	[ɛy]	**f**	[f]	**g**	[g]	**h**	[h]	**i**	[i, ɪ]
j	[dʒ]	**k**	[k]	**l**	[l]	**m**	[m]	**n**	[n]	**ng**	[ŋ]
o	[ɔ]	**ó**	[o]	**oy**	[ɔy]	**ow**	[ɔw]	**p**	[p]	**r**	[ɚ]
s	[s]	**sh**	[ʃ]	**t**	[t]	**u**	[u, ʊ]	**v**	[v]	**w**	[w]
y	[y]	**z**	[z]	**zh**	[ʒ]	**ã**	[ã]	**ẽ**	[ẽ]	**õ**	[ɔ̃]

Figure 1: Orthography for Carriacou Creole English.
(Approximate phonetic values are in brackets. The nasal vowels and **ey** are needed for Creole French words used in Creole English, such as *sukuyã* 'vampire' and *soley* 'bigeye fish'.)

PROJECT HISTORY

In late 1982 the Project began by pretesting children in both the treatment and control groups in ME using a simple, home-made reading inventory that included four types of tasks:

1. Word recognition. Children were required to circle the word that matched a picture;
2. Grammar. Children chose the grammatically appropriate completion of a sentence and circled it, e.g.:

   The girl *run / ran* home for lunch;

3. Semantics. Children chose the semantically appropriate completion of a sentence:

   We sweeten our tea with *salt / sugar*;

4. Passage comprehension. Children read a short passage in ME and then answered 5-10 multiple choice questions about the passage. The passages were usually taken from primary level language arts materials.

No written instructions were included and no writing was required; the children responded by simply circling the answer of their choice.

Questions were drawn randomly from a bank of similar items at each testing. The treatment group was pretested twice to check for reliability of the inventory, and then tested at the end of each of three 13-week school terms as the treatment progressed. A control group of 13-14 year olds of similar academic standing were tested in ME each time the treatment group was tested.

Treatment sessions began in January 1983. The children had to give up two or three of their regular language arts sessions each week to practice reading CCE. The first exposure the children had to their native language in written form was a primer titled *Karyaku Wod Buk* ('Carriacou Word Book'). This primer was drawn on mimeograph stencils and printed on the school's Gestetner machine. The primer used simple line drawings to illustrate the example words used to introduce the orthography; the drawings represented only things which the children could be assumed to be familiar with (Appendix A). As the children learned the words for a given symbol, they were asked to contribute new words which they thought had the same sound–this led to some refinement of my phonological analysis of the language.[5] Flash cards were made after each session and the children drilled with them as part of each session's reading practice. The children enjoyed these drills and vied with each other for the chance to lead them; this was the first indication I had that the whole experience would be pleasant for them.

After going through the primer, I collected language experience texts from the children. The first were in the form of sentences telling what had happened on the weekend, e.g.:

Pipl kil pig.	People killed pigs.
A bék bred Satodé.	I baked bread on Saturday.
A bin an fishnin an a en-kech notin.	I went fishing and I didn't catch anything.

Figure 2: Language experience texts.

These sentences were first written on the board and practised, then put in a small booklet with a simple drawing illustrating each. At the same time, the new words were added to the flash cards and incorporated into the drills.

The success of this booklet quickly led to others, each containing a story told by the children. The first full story was about a *lajables*, a mythical woman with one cloven hoof in place of a foot who lures people into talking to her and then scrambles their brains (Appendix B). As with the first booklet, the new words were added to the flash cards and used every session in drill. In a short time there were enough booklets that children could be working in small groups either reading to each other or drilling each other with the flash cards. In addition, the stories were put on sentence strips and the children practiced putting the scrambled stories back together.

In the middle of the term, I gave the children a word-recognition test modeled on the one in the ME inventory, except that it was in Creole. They surprised me with a mean score of 82 percent, as well as they had performed on the pretests. Some observers of the project had predicted that my introduction of a new spelling system would confuse the children, but obviously this was not the case.

Near the end of the first term, the stories and other texts used for reading during the term were collected into a reader which, like the Primer, were stenciled and reproduced at the school so that each child could have one. The reader was called *Kom Le Wi Rid #1* ('Let's Read #1'). At the end of the term, the first posttest was administered to the treatment and control groups. No significant difference was observed at this point, as to be expected after such a short time.

Several interesting things were done during the second term. First, at the request of the school principal, a group of high-academic children was added to the Creole reading program to get an idea of how these children, already reasonably good readers, would react. Since I had no more primers, I simply wrote the words on the board and had them practice reading. Of course, they could also use the treatment group's flashcards and booklets. On the third day of instruction, a startling thing happened. A story the treatment group had been reading the previous day was accidentally left on the board; this was not a folktale that "everybody knows" but rather a personal anecdote. I entered the class to find these new children reading the story out loud, with virtually no problems or hesitation of the sort they constantly encounter in reading ME (see Appendix C).

After this I began trying out my orthography on other already literate CCE speakers. I found that in general they had no problem adjusting to the new system in less than five minutes. The chief difficulties were the graphemes **i** and **ay** which people tended to read as /ay/ and /ey/ as in ME "I" and "*day*." Indeed, some volunteered that it was easy to read because it "feels right" or "this is the way our language ought to be spelled". On the other hand, I have always found the system opaque to non-Creole speakers.

During this term, for the first time, the treatment group was tested fully in Creole using a format identical to the ME inventory, e.g.:

Wi doz-put *salt* / *shuga* in wi ti.
Wat animal doz-dé in di pastya?
(a) Maniku (b) Fowl (c) Kyatl

Figure 3: Sample question items in CCE.

The results were very encouraging. Far from being confused the children performed as well or better than they had on the ME inventory. Even more importantly, when they were given their posttest at the end of the term they showed an improvement over their pretest scores which was significant at just short of the .001 level. In contrast, the control group also improved but their change in score was significant only at the .05 level. This was despite the fact that the treatment group was actually having fewer hours per week of instruction in ME than the control group because their time was being taken up by reading in Creole!

The third term of contact with the treatment group began extremely well. A young home economics teacher who was able to read my orthography on first sight volunteered to work with the children, which meant that I could do more observation. We began with a heavy dose of phonics drills and a second reader, *Kom Le Wi Rid #2*, was produced on an electronic stencil cutter and thus much better quality than the first, which was clumsily drawn directly on the stencils (see Appendix D). I managed to check the children's sight with a vision chart borrowed from the island physician and satisfied myself that they were not poor readers simply because of poor eyesight. In cooperation with a visiting musicologist, a song book containing a number of Big Drum and

folksongs in Creole French and English was produced (McDaniel and Kephart 1983).

On October 19, a coup took place in Grenada during which the Prime Minister and a number of others were killed. Schools were closed indefinitely to prevent teachers and students from getting together and protesting. Then, a week later, the US occupied the island. School was eventually reopened but things never did get back to normal as first the Marines and then the 82nd Airborne used the school's playing field for a helicopter landing zone. We managed to hold a few classes and capitalized on the children's new experiences to read words like *elikapta*, *marin*, *jet*, and *parashut*. But the earlier momentum had ended, and I had to return to the University of Florida without finishing the term or giving a posttest. I was able to return to Carriacou for a month in June-July, 1984, and at that time I held a few more treatment sessions and gave the groups their final posttest. At this stage, after six months of not doing any reading in Creole, there was again no significant difference between the treatment and control groups in their reading of ME. Thus, most of my conclusions are drawn from the period before the coup and U.S. intervention.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

It seems safe to say that there is some evidence that learning to read Creole English was having a positive effect on the treatment group's reading of Metropolitan English. Note the history of the treatment and control groups' scores on the ME reading test:

	Pretest	**POS 1**	**POS 2**	**POS 3**	**Change**
Treatment	46.5	39.8	61.5	49.9	+7.3%
Controls	63.3	51.0	73.9	67.6	+6.8%

Table 1: Performance of treatment and control groups on ME reading inventory.

As already mentioned, the greatest difference between the two groups occurred at Posttest 2, where the improvement of the treatment group was nearly 50 times more significant (i.e. only one-fiftieth as likely

to be due to chance) as the control group's. Some critics of the project had insisted that learning to read in Creole, and especially with a phonemic orthography, would confuse the children and that their reading of ME would suffer as a result (see Todd 1974:81-6 for a scholarly example of such criticism). The children in the treatment group proved that this was not the case both by their general performance in ME, as seen above, and by their performance on three types of tasks of the inventory, in both CC and ME, over the course of the project:

	English *12/82*	**Creole** *2/83*	**English** *3/83*	**Creole** *6/83*	**English** *6/83*
Word Recogn.	83%	82%	73%	87%	91%
Semantic Cloze	59%	xxxx	62%	70%	74%
Passage Comp.	41%	xxxx	21%	62%	57%

Table 2: Performance of the treatment group on various reading tasks in both Creole and ME.

Overall, there is improvement over the project time whether questions were given in Creole or ME. In my opinion, people who offhandedly dismiss an approach like this underestimate both the intelligence of the children in question and the power of phonemic orthography. They also do not understand the holistic nature of the reading skill itself.

The power of the orthography was demonstrated over and over again during the research. My favourite example occurred when a friend, the principal of a prestigious high school in Grenada, insisted that her students would not be able to read my materials because their education had made them forget Creole (!). I gave one of her top 12-year old students a copy of Reader #2 and let her look through it for five minutes. I then handed her another text, which she had not seen, and asked her to read it on sight for the principal. She did so perfectly, and the principal had to revise on the spot some of her notions about language.[6]

It is worth repeating here that ME speakers find written Creole quite opaque, as it should be. Without a knowledge of the language they are unable to extract meaning from the graphic cues, proof that Creole is not simply broken or ungrammatical English.

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One particularly strong myth regarding creole languages is that they are suitable for folk tales and songs, but not for teaching and learning of new material. I was not able to explore this aspect of the problem as systematically as I wanted, but the Project did shed some light on it. For one thing, many of the texts children read were folktales and songs which were already familiar to them orally, but in slightly different versions; they were still able to read them. They were also able to read personal anecdotes.

Several attempts were made to give children information through Creole English. One was a paragraph about animals in Carriacou, followed by some multiple choice questions on which the children averaged between 3 and 4 correct out of 5, better than they had done in ME. Another was a passage in Reader #3 about spider monkeys, a South American monkey which does not occur in Grenada or Carriacou. No test was given on this passage, but we read it in class and the children were able to discuss it in Creole readily.

The project also demonstrated that it is possible to produce written material meaningful and relevant to the local context of children with equipment generally available in the "Third World", provided that someone has done the anthropological linguistic background work. The results are not as slick and colourful as those produced by the large publishing houses (see Borely 1978 for an example), but the children, at least those who participated in this project, enjoy them. The Readers were in constant demand even by children who were not in the treatment group.

While the project was not able to prove conclusively that reading Creole English helps children learn to read Metropolitan English, no evidence was found that it hurt. At the same time, the enjoyment demonstrated by the treatment group children and most others as they read their native language for the first time suggests that reading Creole would enhance the language arts program in schools in Creole speaking territories by making schooling a more positive experience for them, as well as by helping them to construct a more complete internal model of the reading process which they can then utilize in their encounters with Metropolitan English. It must be kept in mind, however, that ultimately this is not only a scientific question but a political one as well (see Craig 1980). On one level, it is revealing that some of the strongest critics of the project were trained educators (not necessarily Grenadian) who

appeared to feel threatened when linguists, anthropologists, and other social scientists venture onto their turf. At another level, my underlying assumption that it is a good thing for all Creole speakers to learn to read fluently challenges one of the foundations upon which social stratification and the privilege of the West Indian elite class is built. Whether the West Indian elite are ready to lower the linguistic barriers between them and the peasant farmers, fisherfolk, and others who stand to benefit from enlightened language policy remains to be seen.

NOTES

1. This is a revised version of a paper presented at the annual meetings of TESOL in Miami Beach, Florida, April 1987. The research reported herein was funded by grants from the Inter-American Foundation, the Florida Foundation, and the University of Florida Graduate School. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Grenadians and Carriacouans who in any way contributed to the research—many probably did not know they were doing so at the time. Special recognition is due the young people who, as students at the Carriacou Junior Secondary School, taught all of us something about language and culture.
2. The term "creole" when capitalized refers to a specific creole language, such as Haitian Creole; otherwise, it refers to creole languages in general.
3. See Kephart 1992 for a fuller description of the language situation. Also, see Hill 1977 for an ethnographic description of Carriacou.
4. Part of the evidence for "abstract" reading are the high-quality miscues people make as they read aloud. These involve substitution of readers' own ways of expressing something for what they encounter on the page, showing that they are no longer "sounding out" individual words but rather extracting meaning from print and translating it into their own linguistic system. Such high quality substitution has been observed in Aymara speakers reading Aymara, an American Indian language, with a completely phonemic orthography and in people reading Creole English as part of the Carriacou Literacy Project. The fact that many English speakers eventually learn to do this in Traditional Orthography

attests to the ability of the human mind to overcome obstacles, but does not detract from the desirability of phonemic orthographies in general.

5. Specifically, I added the glide **ow** and dropped the long vowels ***/ii/** and ***/aa/**.
6. She had also insisted that her students spoke Metropolitan English while walking home from school; I found out otherwise by following groups of them into St George's. Interestingly enough, other Grenadians had no difficulty reading the materials which were specifically designed for Carriacou, though most "mainlanders" would insist they speak better English than people from Carriacou.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PAGE FROM KARYAKU WOD BUK

APPENDIX B: A STORY IN CARRIACOU CREOLE ENGLISH. (GLOSS ADDED)

Wan dé i av a man from Belmont i si a likl chayl in di ród.
One day there was a man from Belmont who saw a little child in the road.
I en-nó dat waz a lajables chayl, só i pikop di chayl an i bring di chayl hóm.
He didn't know it was a witch's child, so he picked the child up and took it home.
Di chayl kray kray kray. I gi di chayl ti i dó-want.
The child cried and cried. He gave the child tea but it didn't want any.
I gi di chayl kan-bif i dó-want.
He gave the child corned beef, but it didn't want any.
Eniting i givin di chayl, i no-tékin it.
Whatever he gave it,it didn't take anything.
Di chayl ónli kray kray kray. Só di man sé i gó bring di chayl in dakta.
The child just cried and cried. So, the man said he would take the child to the doctor.
Wen i liv góin an bring di chayl in dakta, a set a lajables standop an di hil
When he left to take the child to the doctor, a group of witches stood on the hill
an dé sé: "Deziwé, we yu a-gó?" An di chayl ansa:
and they said: " Desiree, where are you going?" The child answered:
"Dé sé dé a-bring mi a dakta!"
"They say they're taking me to the doctor!"
Den di man drap-dong di chayl an i stat tu-ron. Az i ronin dem lajables wé dé
Then the man dropped the child and started to run. As he ran the witches
an di hil kal-owt: "Yu loki tudé, yu loki! Wi da-dans tunayt, wi da dans tunayt!"
on the hill called out: "Today's your lucky day! We'd have danced with you tonight!"

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APPENDIX C: A PERSONAL ANECDOTE. (GLOSS ADDED)

I av a man in di vilij, i ném iz Jani.
There's a man in the village whose name is Johnny.
So wan dé, di uman i stéin bay gi im pig-fidin tu gó an gi di pig.
So one day the woman he stays with gave him pigfeed to give to the pigs.
Só i ad a brad-domplin in i.
So, there was a broad dumpling in it.
Só i só, i styupid aredi, só i ték di brad-domplin, i ongri anting.
So, he was a bit senile so he took the broad dumpling, he was hungry and all.
Bifo i kud-chu di brad-domplin i gó an i swaló i.
Before he could chew the broad dumpling he went and swallowed it.
Di brad-domplin stik in i chrót. I kyán gó dong.
The broad dumpling stuck in his throat. It couldn't go down.
Só i gó bay di uman góin "mm! mm!"
So he went to the woman going "mm! mm!"
Di uman sé "Jani, wa du yu?"
The woman said, "Johnny, what happened to you?"
I kyán ansa, só shi hit im a kof notin apn,
He couldn't answer, so she struck him and nothing happened,
an shi hit im a neks kof den domplin fling-owt a i mowt.
and she struck him again and then dumplings flew out of his mouth
Den wan dé in fet dé gi im a yo a jus tu-jrink.
Then one day at a party they gave him a pitcher of juice to drink.
I jrink di yo a jus den i ay kom-owt big.
He drank the pitcher of juice and then his eyes bulged.
I nyeli ded. Dé av tu-ról im, an aftawad i kom-bak gud.
He almost died. They had to roll him on the ground, and then he revived.

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE PAGES FROM KOM LE WI RID #2. *(THE PICTURES ARE FROM THE ORIGINAL READER; THE TEXT HAS BEEN RETYPED.)*

Di Gót

Wan dé, Padli an Móna
kom-owt in skul in Leste.
An di wé hóm dé pas an di bich
an pik grèps.

Wen dé mit bay di grèps-tri
dé mit a big gót.

Di gót sé

"Du yu si big byeds layk diz?
Du yu si big byeds layk diz?
Wen a kot am dé gó wanga ya!
Wen a kot am dé gó wanga ya!"

Dé ron ontil dé mit
in di kras in tong.

-4-

Den dé mit di sém gót agen!
I sé

"Du yu si big tit layk diz?
Du yu si big tit layk diz?
Wen a kot am dé gó wanga ya!
Wen a kot am dé gó wanga ya!"

Den dé ron ontil dé mit hóm.
Dé fal-dong spichles
infront di dó.
Den di granmoda
rob dem dong
wit spirit an laym
an dé tel shi wat apn.

-5-

TEACHING ENGLISH TO KRIOL SPEAKERS: THE KARTIYA GAME

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ABSTRACT

Hudson and Taylor's language awareness program provides an excellent rationale and practical guide for teaching English to Kriol speakers. A major difficulty impeding effective implementation is the "shame" factor: Kriol speakers of all ages experience tremendous "shame" when speaking "high English". To overcome this difficulty I propose the "Kartiya Game", which is designed to provide a non-threatening environment in which role play assumes the major pedagogical role. A second rationale for the game is based on the fundamental language learning principle that to learn a language, one must learn the underlying culture. Derived from this principle, I supplement Hudson and Taylor's program with the explicit teaching of dominant white Australian culture, paying particular attention to pivotal paralinguistic features of Standard Australian English. I conclude by suggesting that the Kartiya Game may also be an effective tool for promoting active minority culture maintenance by protecting against the unconscious absorption of hidden white values.

INTRODUCTION

Kriol is the primary language spoken in over 250 Aboriginal communities in the north of Australia from the Barkly Tableland in the east to the Kimberley in the west (Sandefur 1986:35-38). It is an English-based creole which is related to, but distinct from, Torres Strait Creole (Sandefur 1986:20). Despite difficulties with the concept of discrete dialects, and hence, with drawing discrete boundaries between dialects, it appears that Kriol consists of a number of dialect centres which can be divided into

regional and local dialects. Three regional dialects have been the primary focus for study to date: Roper River and Barunga in the Northern Territory, and the Fitzroy Valley in the Kimberley (Sandefur 1986:55-56).

Bamyili, also known as Barunga, is the only school in Australia ever to have had an officially sanctioned and supported Kriol bilingual education program (Sandefur 1986:137); though Ngukurr in the Roper River has used Kriol as the language of instruction for several years (Sandefur 1986:119) and a number of schools have implemented, at one time or another, language awareness programs, the prime aim of which is to teach children to distinguish English and Kriol as two separate languages on the grounds that failure to do so has impeded effective English language learning (see Hudson and Taylor 1987).

It is with these latter types of programs that the present paper is concerned. Language awareness programs are a vastly different enterprise from bilingual education programs. Whereas the latter explicitly teach the vernacular, language awareness programs are concerned solely with using the home language as the springboard for teaching English. I do not wish to enter into the debate of whether Kriol bilingual education programs of one type or another should be implemented in any given location. (see Craig 1977 for a typology of program types). In addition to local linguistic and educational factors, this will hinge on important political and social factors, not least of which is a particular community's aspirations. Given that every Aboriginal group I have ever known desires English language learning, it is a much safer bet, politically, to focus on programs and strategies for facilitating English language learning and development.

Since teaching and learning English is the major concern of the language awareness programs to which I have been referring, such programs should be valuable English language learning tools irrespective of the home language, Kriol or otherwise. This is precisely the situation envisaged by Hudson and Taylor (1987:8), who have provided one of the most explicit, comprehensive and systematic language awareness programs for teaching English to Kriol speakers in the Kimberley.

I have used a program similar to Hudson and Taylor's in a Kimberley community with junior primary children whose first language was Kriol and with adult teacher education students in the same

community, most of whose first language was Kriol, but some of whose first language was Walmajarri, a traditional Aboriginal language of the area. However, I have also used the program on a community in the Pilbara with 12 year-old primary schoolchildren and adult teacher education students, both of whose first language was not Kriol, but Nyangumarta, a Pama-Nyungan language related to Walmajarri.

I have found Hudson and Taylor's language awareness program an invaluable tool for teaching English to community-based Aborigines. The program provides an excellent rationale and practical guide and I believe can be used in a variety of situations where English is being taught as a second language. However, at least two important conditions must be met for effective program implementation. The first is the establishment of sound rapport between teacher and pupils (see Harris 1984:97-102 for a discussion of the importance of teacher-pupil relationships for "knowledge transmission"). This is accomplished most easily when the teacher is an Aboriginal person from the community. This fact has provided a partial rationale for the development of Aboriginal community-based teacher education programs throughout Australia. Since it will be quite some years before sufficient Aboriginal teachers will be trained to service the teaching needs of remote Aboriginal communities, if this is an indigenous aspiration, we still clearly need to focus some energy on appropriate pre-service teacher training for Anglo-Australians teaching on Aboriginal communities.

While sound teacher-pupil rapport is a *necessary* condition for effective implementation of Hudson and Taylor's language awareness program, it is not a *sufficient* condition. A second requirement stems from the fact that community-based Aborigines of all ages, but particularly school age children, experience tremendous "shame" when speaking "High English" (see Harkins 1990). Hudson herself (1983:16) provides an interesting example of this when she cites the case of a Kriol-speaking man who married a non-Kriol speaking woman from the south. The husband said to Hudson: "When my wife first came she used to make me really ashamed. She could only talk like a 'whitefella'". Hudson cites a second instance of a young woman who said: "'It's not okay for blacks to speak English to each other'. She recounted an experience where she was speaking to a white woman using English and her friends nearby were laughing at her, making fun of her for speaking 'high' English, a

sign of snobbery" (Hudson 1983:16). It is crucial that teachers discover means to overcome the "shame" factor. In this context, the receptive/productive distinction becomes important. Richards (n.d.) points out that with exposure to western media such as television and videos, Kimberley Aboriginal children often have a reasonable passive or receptive knowledge of English, but that their production of English speech lags behind. How can we, as teachers, provide an environment which enables Aboriginal children or adults to practise English in a meaningful and non-threatening way? It is in answer to this question that I propose the "Kartiya Game". "Kartiya" is the Aboriginal word commonly used in the Kimberley to refer to non-Aborigines.

THE KARTIYA GAME

The Kartiya Game is essentially a giant role play of Standard Australian English language and culture (compare Harris 1988). The game has a dual rationale. Firstly, it is intended to provide a non-threatening environment for English language and culture learning as a basis for overcoming the "shame" factor. Secondly, it is designed to facilitate Aboriginal culture maintenance by protecting against the unconscious absorption of hidden Anglo-Australian values.

I deliberately specify English language *and* culture learning as program goals, since it is my contention that one cannot learn another language without also learning the underlying cultural uses for which the language is appropriated. This is consistent with Hudson and Taylor's (1987) approach, who write of "switch[ing] between two cultures" and the importance of "control of all relevant languages" for this purpose (p.6), and who suggest that "from the first day at school we need to teach Aboriginal children three parallel ways of seeing, speaking, and maybe doing" (p.7). Indeed, Hudson and Taylor (1987:8) perceive their program as an "essential first step and bridge to competent Standard Australian English use and thus to biculturalism and bilingualism". A quick scan of program objectives reveals, however, that Hudson and Taylor's primary focus, at least in a conceptual sense, is linguistic, rather than cultural. I am aware that the linguistic/cultural distinction is somewhat artifactual, but the significance of the distinction will become apparent as I proceed. The Kartiya Game is intended firstly, as a tool for facilitating

effective implementation of Hudson and Taylor's linguistic program, and secondly, as a cultural supplement to the program.

As a white teacher, I have found that one of the most effective ways into the Kartiya Game, once good rapport has been established, is to use oneself as the target for mimicking. Aboriginal children are wonderful mimics and often their spontaneous mimicking of you in the classroom situation can be used for teaching purposes. For instance, in reading sessions, when I have asked children to break into pairs to share book experiences, I have sometimes found that one or more of the children wants to assume the role of the teacher while their partner acts as a willing, or not so willing, pupil. One of the best examples of this I have witnessed was when a seven year old girl, who couldn't read, placed herself in a chair at the back of the room and insisted upon her six year old protégé sitting quietly and listening to her thoroughly entertaining rendition of the story. Any behaviour on the pupil's part which seemed to indicate inattention was quickly reprimanded with utterances such as: "Christine, be quiet! Sit still! Can't you see I'm reading!" These utterances were accompanied by a wonderful simulation of my body language, including posture, gesture and eye contact, as well as an almost perfect copy of my intonation patterns.

I seized upon this opportunity to have the children take turns at playing "teacher", still in their groups, so that there was no pressure to perform. After all children had had their turn we came together as a whole group and discussed the experience. How did I sit that was different from the children? Did I always sit like this? Only in the classroom? Did other white teachers sit like this? Did Aboriginal people ever sit like this? We then continued with similar questions about how I used my eyes, my hands and other parts of my body and how I used my voice. I then invited our precocious and unabashed little "teacher" to demonstrate her rendition of my classroom teaching. It was a riotous experience for all and soon others were willing to put their dramatic prowess to the test.

With this small and accidental beginning we were soon able to extend our game to include "take-offs" of me in situations other than the classroom setting and to include "take-offs" of other whites, including teachers, the storekeepers, the station adviser, his wife and two teenage sons and so on. In this way we were able to cover quite a range of Anglo-Australians of both sexes, all ages ranging from 6 months to 60 years,

and varying levels of education. This ensured a reasonable cross-section of the white people that the children were likely to encounter. If we also included visitors, both frequent and infrequent, such as the pilots, the doctors, the nurses, the dentist, tradespeople, visiting salespeople, travelling amusement people and so on, not only did we finish up with a comprehensive range of white people to mimic, but we also had an extensive array of situations in which we could practise meaningful and functional English language and its associated paralinguistic features. The number of role play situations is limited only by the teacher's imagination. To add yet another dimension to our game, I put an old telephone in our classroom and this also provided the source for innumerable hours of pleasure and learning. Start collecting old clothes, make some masks and puppets with the children, and you have more than enough raw materials at your disposal.

Once I had used the children as "teachers" in the initial session, I soon found that everybody wanted to be a teacher all of the time. Armed with a piece of chalk, it was amazing how some of the "littlies" grew in confidence. The key to overcoming the "shame", it seemed, was that it wasn't really they who were standing in front of the class doing the "teaching"; they were sheltered safely behind the mask of the white teacher. Once you reorganize your program, you discover that there is sufficient time for every child to "teach" every day, both in the whole class situation and in small groups. In a class of 20-25, allowing each child just one minute a day in front of the class, and I can assure it is a minute very well spent, takes up less than half an hour.

It is important to realize that the Kartiya Game isn't just something that you do as an additional activity to be grafted onto your regular oral English program. It *is* the oral English language and culture program; that is, used in conjunction with a language awareness program such as Hudson and Taylor's. It can, of course, be extended to form the basis of the entire junior school curriculum where English is used as the medium of instruction.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION

I have indicated ways in which the game can be used to overcome the "shame" factor in order to implement more effectively Hudson and

Taylor's language awareness program. I have also suggested ways in which we can explicitly draw attention to pivotal paralinguistic features of Standard Australian English, such as body posture, hand and eye movements, voice inflection and so on; features which are crucial components of the message/meaning system of all languages. I now want to focus briefly on the sociolinguistics of communication.

Stephen Harris (1984) has written of "Yolngu rules of interpersonal communication". "Yolngu" is the word that the indigenous peoples of northeast Arnhem Land use to refer to themselves. Based on his research at Milingimbi, he provides a detailed analysis of the social context of Aboriginal speech, Aboriginal speech acts which confuse outsiders, and contrasting Aboriginal and white speech styles which cause Aborigines confusion. I am not suggesting that this work be accepted as an article of faith. Its validity in situations other than the Milingimbi context is a matter which needs to be established empirically. But I do suggest that the material provides essential and interesting background reading to all white teachers on remote Aboriginal communities. Armed with this information and sensitive powers of observation, the white teacher should then be in a position to engage his/her Aboriginal pupils in a collaborative research venture aimed at identifying the sociolinguistic rules that apply to that particular speech community. Identification of these rules would then be used as the basis for comparison with Anglo-Australian rules of interpersonal communication.

It is absolutely essential with such comparisons that the teacher reinforce the fact that no one system is better than the other in any absolute sense. Each system is *appropriate* for its particular speech community. It is the task of the teacher to assist children to clarify what these rules are and when it is appropriate to apply them. Let me take an example or two to illustrate precisely how we might explicitly teach Anglo-Australian rules of interpersonal communication.

One of the most obvious examples concerns Anglo-Australian conventions for politeness. As children we are socialized into saying "please" prior to a request and "thank you" upon completion of the request. As we grow older, we learn that our requests are more likely to be granted if we smile at the other person, look into their eyes and include their first name as part of the request utterance. Another factor which facilitates granting of our request is that in our culture the onus for

deciding whether a request is reasonable or not lies with the asker. If a white person in our culture asks another for something, you can be assured that they are reasonably confident of the request being granted. As Harris (1984:157) says, "the person who is making the request satisfie(s) himself/herself of its reasonableness and likelihood of a positive response *before* asking it." Furthermore, it would be regarded as bad form for someone in our culture to refuse someone's request unless they had a very good reason for doing so. This is in stark contrast to the situation on many Aboriginal communities. On the other hand, Harris (1984:157) points out that "Yolngu tend to leave the assessment of the reasonableness of a request up to the person being asked". A refused request provides no cause for offence, provided it is not done in a "rough" way. Add to this the fact that prolonged and direct eye contact and use of personal names are not preferred cultural strategies for community-based Aborigines (Harris 1984:113-115), and we have a situation that is vastly different from the Anglo-Australian one. Such situations, of course, provide ample raw material for communication breakdown. How often have I heard white people on Aboriginal communities exclaim things such as: "The cheek of him! I hardly know him and here he is asking me for the loan of my car. And he didn't even say please! He knew, too, that he had a "hide" because he couldn't even look me straight in the eye". This seemingly valid interpretation is riddled with cultural biases which are not at all evident to whites wearing Anglo-Australian conceptual goggles.

Clearly, teaching English to Aborigines on remote communities is a far more "culturally loaded" exercise than simply teaching the words. We have to teach explicitly the accompanying "cultural baggage" and we have to do it in a way which minimizes the unconscious absorption of hidden white values. That's why making the hidden agenda explicit is so important and where I have found the Kartiya Game so effective. Similar to Harris' (1988) notions, we treat the entire exercise of learning Anglo-Australian language and culture as a "giant role play". As I have suggested previously, this also assists in overcoming the "shame" factor.

I had one teacher education student, a 16 year-old boy (who, incidentally, had no desire to be a teacher–in fact, whose prime aspiration in life seemed to be to go to the stock camp with the other young lads, and whose presence in the college was a result of parental pressure),

whom I had never heard speak English. One of the most rewarding teaching experiences of my time at this community occurred one day when I had split the students into pairs to play the Kartiya Game. One of the activities we used to pursue each day was called "News Items". This was done either by discussing a piece from the "West Australian" newspaper or listening to an item from the ABC news. This, incidentally, was also an excellent tool for teaching Western culture. If you can grapple with the difficult language embodied in Anglo-Australian news items, both at a written and aural level, you have come a long way towards mastering the intricacies of Australian language, and the culture which underlies it. On this particular day there had been an item about the Queen. We had spent some time discussing the role of the Queen and we split into pairs to play a game in which the Queen was to receive a visiting Head of State. Students were to take turns at each of the roles. I was simply amazed at overhearing the young 16 year-old Kriol speaker. He, incidentally, was not aware that anyone was listening to or observing him other than his partner, who was his "mate". Not only did he make an excellent "fist" at speaking "High English", facilitated by prior discussion of the appropriate vocabulary and language structures, but he also simulated beautifully the body language and intonation patterns of a "high-flying" speaker of Standard Australian English.

You may have noticed in this example my reference to discussing appropriate vocabulary and language structures prior to playing the Kartiya Game. While we did not always do this – to do so religiously would have destroyed many spontaneous teaching/learning opportunities – it was, nonetheless, an important pedagogical strategy; as was prior discussion and demonstration of appropriate paralinguistic features. Post discussion was also an integral aspect of our language and culture program. In some respects there are parallels with the "concentrated encounter" approach developed by Gray (1985a) as part of the Traeger Park project at Alice Springs. Gray (1985b:94) describes a concentrated encounter as:

> a role play, dialogue, or discussion session for which perception of the relevant situational context ... has been developed and is shared by both teachers and children. In effect, the concentrated encounter sets a specific context for

> which the meaning requirements are known by all parties. The task facing the child is to develop the language skills necessary to meet those requirements.

I would add, of course, that the task should also include developing the *cultural* skills necessary to meet those requirements.

For Gray (1985b), the situational context can be expressed, following Halliday and Hasan, in terms of field, tenor and mode, where field refers to the experience and information involved in the context; tenor to the appropriate role relationships and their accompanying behavioural manifestations in communication; and mode to the requirements and limitations of the communication channel employed. It has been my argument that knowledge of the situational context cannot be assumed; indeed, that it needs to be taught explicitly.

CONCLUSION

I want to conclude now with a few brief remarks about how the Kartiya Game might be an effective tool for promoting indigenous culture maintenance by protecting against the unconscious absorption of hidden white values. It should be apparent from what I have said already that one of the most crucial aspects of the game is to make explicit the hidden agenda of white schooling. The teacher should be continually exposing this agenda and reinforcing that we are learning to play the Kartiya Game not because it is better in any absolute sense, but because it enables us to better access the dominant white culture. In this sense, learning to play the game is an exercise in empowerment. If we do not treat English language and culture learning as a huge role play, it seems there are two possible scenarios. The first is that Aborigines resist white schooling (see Folds 1987) and fail to learn sufficient of Anglo-Australian language and culture to be able to operate effectively within that culture. The second alternative is that Aborigines do acquire sufficient cultural capital to access the dominant white culture, but in doing so, they unconsciously absorb much of the hidden baggage of Anglo-Australian culture. This may well be detrimental to the maintenance of their first culture.

Exposing the hidden agenda of white education is an exercise which need not be restricted to Aborigines living on remote communities. I have discovered that it is a useful thing to do in mainstream settings.

Here at James Cook University my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work and Community Welfare students come from a variety of backgrounds. Some, but not many, come from remote communities; many come from the towns and cities of North Queensland; some come from Brisbane; some have never been to a remote community prior to starting the course. Whatever their background, however, I impress upon them that they are here to learn the white person's secret language and rituals. In one sense they are privileged, because only a minority of white students ever get the opportunity to learn the game. Once they serve their apprenticeship they can weave their own magic on the world, and who is to know that in their private life they secretly snigger at whites and their funny ways?

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EDUCATING SPEAKERS OF CARIBBEAN ENGLISH CREOLE IN THE UNITED STATES

Katherine Fischer
Caribbean Academic Program

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Caribbean Academic Program, a program in the United States for high school students who speak varieties of Caribbean English Creole. It discusses first the problems of teaching English to these students and then the approaches of the program: emphasizing that English and Creole are separate languages and focusing on the structural and functional differences between the two. Next, teaching methods, curriculum and parental involvement are outlined and illustrated with a case study, log entries and a classroom transcript. Finally, extracts from student evaluations are given which testify to the success of the program.

INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Academic Program (CAP) at Evanston Township High School has for the past three years been attempting to address the language-learning needs of speakers of Caribbean English Creole who have migrated to the United States. This paper sets forth the theory and practice of CAP, and the reasons which may be responsible for its increasing success.

The main goal of CAP is to help students achieve oral and written fluency in English so that they may succeed in the academic curriculum. Many Creole speakers lack motivation to learn English, either because they confuse Creole with English and assume they already know it, or because they have decided to reject English as the language of the elite. In addition, many Creole speakers lack respect for their native language, regarding it as "broken English".

CAP has based itself on the premise that Creole and English are separate languages. Working from the theories advanced by Hubert

Devonish and others (Devonish 1986, 1987; Bailey 1966), we have taken the approach of teaching the students that they are not native English speakers and providing them with historical and linguistic information to back up that assertion, as well as with opportunities to read and write in Creole using the Cassidy-LePage writing system, intermixed with work with materials developed for teaching English to speakers of Creole.

This is a sharp departure from the traditional approach of treating Creole as a dialect. It treats the native language of the students with full respect, devoting classroom time to oral and written activities in Creole. Our experience has been that students who clearly distinguish English as a separate language from Creole develop the motivation to tackle English language acquisition.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE LANGUAGE ISSUE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO CREOLE SPEAKERS

In my opinion, Creole is a language spoken by mostly uneducated people in Jamaica. It is not taught in school in Jamaica and is not considered by the country as an acceptable form of language and therefore should not be recognized as such. Literacy overcomes this language problem and therefore our focus should be increasing literacy in the population with the use of the English language and outlawing the use of the Creole language.

This opinion, written by a Jamaican student soon after her immigration to the United States expresses quite succinctly, if extremely, one of the prevailing social attitudes toward Creole language. Attitudes expressed by our students range from "Creole isn't a language; it's just broken English" to "I don't talk like that – that's country talk" to "I'm a Jamaican [Belizean, Barbadian, etc.] and I'm not going to change the way I talk". These attitudes are *not* shared by most students seeking English as a Second Language or Bilingual services in North American schools.

What are the problems involved in teaching a dominant language, such as English, to students who are of the opinion that their native language should be abolished, or is just an uneducated, bastardized version of the dominant language? Or, on the other side of the coin, what are the problems teaching students who have decided to reject the dominant language precisely because it is dominant? These imply issues

which must be addressed in developing educational programs for Caribbean students. They are the questions which necessitate a different approach to teaching Creole speakers than is ordinarily taken toward foreign language speakers, who usually have a healthy respect for their native languages as well as for the new language they are trying to acquire. In the case of Caribbean students, it is necessary to teach them to have the same sort of healthy respect for both languages, and perhaps more significantly, for themselves as language learners.

Complicating the issue are code-switching and blending (Craig 1978:276-78) which result in a good deal of confusion among students, especially given the attitude which they have been taught regarding English as compared to Creole. Where does one language end and the other begin? The students don't see the need to expend much effort in learning English, since they feel that it is something they already know. The fact that, in their view, they have not quite conquered all the fine points of the grammar is not perceived by them as particularly important, but in fact becomes a source of frustration, negativism about English, and low self-image.

To make matters more difficult, only English is taught in the Caribbean schools which immigrant children attended before emigrating. This creates a situation in which students have been "expected to acquire literacy in a language they do not speak. The difficulty of the pupils acquiring any literacy at all is increased several times over" (Devonish 1983:64). Craig (1983:66) points out that the difference between spoken language and the language of the school "does become a barrier once the child has grasped the mechanical aspects of reading and becomes seriously involved in comprehending at the sentence and discourse levels". If these points are true, we would expect to find a problem with illiteracy in the Caribbean, as indeed is the case. The corollary, of course, is that the group of immigrant students will include a significant number of students in need of basic literacy training, as is also the case in our experience at Evanston. As it is commonly accepted that literate people more easily learn to master new languages, it becomes clear that our students come to us with a double handicap: lack of literacy in English, and lack of literacy in their native language. This combination of circumstances leads the students to have a corresponding lack of respect

for their native language, and thereby for themselves as competent language learners.

At the root of all of these points of view is the confusion over whether or not Creole is indeed a language. Says Craig (1978:280):

> There will tend to be a problem of low motivation in creole-speaking children attempting to learn the standard. Part of this problem will derive from the child's perception of a relationship between the creole language and the one the child is supposed to be learning in school; this perception has been shown to create in the child the illusion that the standard language is already known, and the result is that the child fails to obtain the equivalent of the satisfaction and learning reinforcement of the foreign learner who knows that something new has been learned and is available for use.

Clearly, our approach to teaching immigrant children from the English Creole speaking countries of the Caribbean must be different from the commonly used approaches toward teaching foreign-speakers in the schools, as well as different from the strategies used with native speakers.

COMPONENTS OF A TEACHING PROGRAM

With these thoughts in mind, a theoretical framework and method for approaching the classroom began to emerge. The two basic components of this framework follow.

First, the teaching of English to Creole speakers must be based on the foundation that Creole and English are separate languages. This point must be clearly made to the students. A person cannot learn a language unless he/she decides to. If the students remain convinced that they already know English, they will never decide to learn it. For the students to eventually set themselves the task of learning English, they must in fact be convinced that the two languages are distinct and have very different structures.

Second, once students have accepted, or are on the road to accepting, this idea, they will be ready to tackle the structural differences

between Creole and English. At this point, it will be necessary to provide them with materials and tasks which directly address those structural differences, as well as with plenty of exposure to written and spoken English.

It is a sentiment expressed by many people that motivation for a Creole speaker to learn English often does not come until the student is much older, in most cases already out of school, when he or she develops the social awareness that knowledge of English is necessary for advancement within the social structure. My experience in the classroom has impressed upon me that the students must and *can* have the motivation at the time they are setting about the task of learning English. Otherwise, they do not truly apply themselves. In addition, their low opinion of Creole as "broken English" lowers their self-esteem. They are afraid to participate or ask questions in their other classes for fear of making mistakes in English and being laughed at. This obviously leads to numerous academic as well as social problems. I felt that the motivating force would lie in teaching them that English and Creole were different languages.

Many of these conclusions were arrived at only after a year of trial and error in the classroom, during and after which I searched for ideas and advice. One scholar (Devonish 1987) gave the following suggestion:

> It probably, particularly in your situation, is going to be necessary to make them a lot more aware of their language background in various ways ... One thing that may be worth trying as well, as part of that process of making them more aware of their own language background, is to teach them to write in it ... It's certainly worth a try, because it allows them to focus on the language as something which is real. They have been taught all along that the only real language is written language, so a useful way to try it might be to get them to write it.
>
> What is probably most useful is to get them to become much more aware of their own language and the way that their own language differs from what you are telling them is correct English: in a sense using them as the people who will diagnose the problem. In the end it's a consciousness of

> their own language identity which will then allow them to say, "Well okay, this English thing is a different business. It's a language-learning experience. Different languages do things in a very different way. Let's find out how they do it."

I was at first sceptical of this idea, and particularly of my own ability to put it into practice in the classroom. However, I had nothing to lose by trying, and became convinced by the results.

CAP: A LOOK INTO THE CLASSROOM

The actual classroom experience of the second and third years has provided a marked contrast with that of the first year. (For classroom logs and transcripts, see Appendices 1 and 2.) Treating Creole and English as distinct languages – in particular, presenting both as languages to be read and written – has produced the anticipated results: a leap in the level of motivation, and a higher level of success at the actual language-learning tasks.

Each new group of students still comes to the program with the same set of negative ideas about Creole and/or English. What has become evident, however, is that as the language curriculum proceeds, the negativity gives way to enthusiastic participation. Once the students grasp the ideas being presented, and particularly once they grasp the fact that the teachers accept and respect Creole and expect them to do likewise, the students respond with willing cooperation and interest. Gone are the days of insistence on "Creole is just broken English", "that's bad talk", and even "I already speak English, I don't need to learn it." No longer do we hear, "I'm Jamaican and I don't want to change the way I speak", because now the students perceive that we are not asking them to change the way they speak, but to add another language to their repertoire. Now, we hear things like, "You know, Ms Fischer, I think I can hear the difference now. I think I can hear which is the correct way to say it in standard English. But I still have trouble when I'm writing it." (a student comment during an oral grammar activity, April, 1989)

A striking change is in the motivation level in grammar classes. Whereas during the first year, students resisted filling in the grammar worksheets we had them do, now during grammar activities their attention is riveted to the task at hand. Dennis Craig's and Grace Walker-Gordon's

New World English series has frequent oral drill activities involving skills such as tense changing, pluralisation, possessive formation, etc. At first I wondered whether the students wouldn't feel put on the spot or feel that the activities were too childish for them. But the students have shown great enthusiasm for them, often insisting on making them into games – even complaining when they end. The upperclass students (ages 15-19) vie with each other for the opportunity to give the past tense of a particular verb. When assigned what appear to be tedious written drills, they attend to the task with the same vigour and seriousness. This attitude reflects students who have dropped the pretence that they already know English, and are now consciously trying to learn it.

Oral use of Creole in the classroom

We are using Creole in the classroom in a number of settings, oral and written. Are we creating an unnecessary problem by having students write in Creole? Will students get distracted from the main task at hand, namely English acquisition? Should we be disallowing the students to speak Creole in the classroom? The answer to all three questions is no. For all the reasons given earlier and throughout this paper, confidence in their command of Creole, along with clearly demarcating it from English, helps students to pursue English acquisition. We are trying to have the students set themselves the task of learning English. We will not accomplish this by teaching them to ignore Creole, but rather to respect it more as a separate language.

Regarding use of Creole in the classroom, this depends on the circumstances. Obviously, when the lesson is aimed at the acquisition of English, students must be encouraged to use English, corrected, etc. This is the case in CAP English classes, in grammar lessons, etc. In addition, of course, during most of the school day the CAP student is in regular classes in which only English is used. However, when the lesson in a CAP class involves a discussion of, for instance, a cultural issue, or a point for consideration in the Freshman history class, Creole use is permitted. It would be hypocritical (and who is better at catching hypocrisy than the young!) to teach the students that Creole and English are deserving of equal respect and then not allow them to speak Creole. The students take seriously the idea that Creole is a language when they see that we allow its use in a setting in which it is usually not allowed,

even in the Caribbean: school. It can be seen that a program for Creole students without a teacher who understands the language would be severely hampered.

A case study

There was a boy who came into CAP from rural Jamaica in the fall of 1987. He was 17, and came with an older sister and a younger brother. This boy was barely literate, and it was impossible to read his writing because he invented all of his spellings (as well as having abominable handwriting), and even when I figured out the spellings, the sentences didn't make sense. His sister and brother were much better off than he academically, and his parents had decided to put their educational support behind the younger brother and give up on the older one's education. But since they had moved here, Kenny (a pseudonym) had come back to school.

Kenny's low level of literacy and his self-image as uneducable led him to be a constant talker and joker in the class. He rarely took any task seriously. To get any production out of him, I had to stand next to his elbow.

But the language theory that I was teaching interested Kenny. And when I asked him to write in Creole, he actually became animated. His attempts were still hard to read, but at least his invented spellings were more on target. In addition, because Creole was a language he had a thorough grasp of, when I figured out his spellings, his papers in Creole made sense. In fact, he rapidly became one of the best in the class at writing in Creole (perhaps because he possessed so little English), and I repeatedly praised his efforts. He became somewhat of an "expert", and visibly proud of his accomplishment.

An interesting thing happened. Suddenly, Kenny became interested in learning English. His attempts at writing in English grew more serious. And his interest in the grammar sessions grew. His behaviour became less and less objectionable. By the end of the year, everyone was remarking on the change.

A year later, Kenny was in the lower of two levels of grammar groups. But he was the unquestioned leader of the class. This English thing had become a challenge to him. He had the answer to every question, was quick to help explain things to other students, and provided leadership in the group work.

One day, he was sitting talking to another student when he should have been working. I challenged him. "Ms Fischer," he said, "he doesn't understand his work for English class. I'm trying to explain it to him." I took a look before blurting out what I was tempted to (i.e. that he shouldn't be doing that in this class). Kenny was reading an adapted version of *MacBeth* aloud to his friend and explaining to him what it meant.

Of course, CAP does not provide unqualified success for all students. We undoubtedly still have a great deal to learn. That we haven't done better is largely because of financial limitations imposed on the program. At this point, the typical CAP student spends only 40 to 80 minutes per day in CAP classes. There is not enough continuity and follow-through for students who have been in the program. Once they have achieved a very minimal proficiency in reading and writing in English, they are generally pushed out of the CAP program to make room for others, and left to sink or swim in the regular school setting. A recognition of the long-term language acquisition needs of these students, which would require more significant expenditures on staffing, has still not been put into practice in a thoroughgoing way.

CAP'S BASIC LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

Our current language curriculum now has seven aspects, all of which are continuously reinforced throughout the year:

Language theory

This includes topics such as: what is a language? is Creole broken? are some languages "better" than others? We teach the history of English as initially a creole type of language itself, and the history of Caribbean Creole, as well as definitions of pidgin, creole and other terms. We use the *Story of English* segment on pidgins and creoles, Louise Bennett (both on tape and in written poetry), lectures, and plenty of discussion.

Discussion of language-related issues

These discussions recur frequently, on the following and other topics: Are Creole and English equal? Which one or both do you want to know and why? Should Creole be written? Should Creole be taught in schools in

the Caribbean? Would teaching in Creole help literacy? Would it help or hinder people wanting to learn English? What's the point in learning English and all its grammar rules? Do you / should you speak up in your other classes? How do you deal with people who make fun of your language? Is it okay to speak Creole in school? What is the effect of speaking Creole to people who don't understand you?

Writing in Creole

This is a small but important part of the curriculum. Students periodically are asked to write short essays or letters in Creole. The Cassidy-LePage phonemic writing system for Creole is introduced and explained, and students are given some experience trying to use it in their writing. An attempt is made to provide them with some materials (mainly transcribed dub poetry) written in this phonemic system as well. An institution in this respect is a letter written to the students by Hubert Devonish in response to some of them writing to him in Creole, asking why he maintains the views they observed him expressing on the *Story of English*. His letter was written using the Cassidy-LePage system and has been read and reread and taken home by all CAP students since (as well as by other school staff members and parents). The use of a standardized orthography not based on English spelling conventions has a marked impact on the students' (and staff's and parents') ability to comprehend that Creole and English are separate languages. Many students become quite enthusiastic about it, and their sense of respect for Creole visibly grows. As there is not enough classroom time to teach the students to have a working knowledge of the spelling system, some students have begun an after school club which plans to publish a small magazine written in Creole and translated into English.

English grammar

This is a major part of the curriculum. Oral, reading and writing activities from the *New World English* series are at the core. Other materials for teaching English grammar are also used selectively. There is a heavy emphasis on writing.

Caribbean literature

We make extensive use of original works with reading guides and cooperative learning techniques to make the literature available to all students. This is a major part of the curriculum. Use of original works rather than adapted and simplified versions gives students access to superior literature and promotes a positive self image.

Translations

Students are frequently required to translate sentences from a variety of sources into English. Often this is done with Caribbean literature read in the class which uses Creole in its dialogues. In addition, students are asked to provide Creole translations of English sentences. An important project for the first-year group is the translation of a play written in a mixture of English and Creole into correct Creole. The play is then performed by the students and videotaped.

Creole Days

This important and popular part of the curriculum involves a class period approximately once a month devoted to oral expression in Creole. Students take turns performing poetry, jokes, riddles, stories, and songs in Creole. This activity is also sometimes committed to audio or video tape. (It has been taken "on the road" once to Caribbean students at a middle school, where it was so well received that it will undoubtedly become a permanent part of the curriculum.) The purpose of this day is to legitimate and engender pride in the use of Creole and the cultural richness that it possesses, and consequently to raise the estimation in their own eyes of the language in which the students already excel.

The general thrust of this curriculum then, is to put the necessary theory into the hands of the students themselves, to provide ideas and experiences which will help them to both make a sharp distinction in their minds between Creole and English and develop a healthy respect for *both* languages, and to provide an atmosphere which will both motivate the students to tackle the language learning task they face and to tackle their other academic and social challenges with a good, solid sense of their own self worth and capability.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

No educational program can expect to succeed and sustain itself without active parental participation. This is especially true if the program differs sharply from people's prior experience and is controversial. As CAP was developing, there were some who predicted that parents would not approve of the approach being taken to the language issue. Many parents harbour the same prejudices against Creole as do their children, one of which is that Creole, while it may be fine to use at home and with friends, has no place in school. However, CAP has taken the approach of explaining clearly and directly what we do and why, and parents have turned out to be very supportive.

The students themselves, many of whom develop great loyalty to the program, are our best ambassadors. They take the ideas they are learning in class home with them, along with their enthusiasm. When parents come in for conferences, they are usually quite aware of what we are doing already, and have questions. If they don't, I will usually come right to the point by saying something along these lines: "I imagine your child has told you that he/she was writing in Creole, and you're probably wondering why on earth we're doing that in class." Or sometimes, the student will start the conversation. For instance: "Ms Fischer, here is my mother. I tried to explain to her that Creole is a language, but she doesn't believe me. Will you please explain it to her?"

CAP currently has a Parent Group, which holds meetings about language and social/cultural adjustment issues and conducts social activities. All of the leaders of this group were initially sceptical of CAP's approach to language. However, parents are usually supportive when they see that someone at the school is taking a personal interest in their children, and addressing the special needs which their children have.

IN CONCLUSION: A FIRST STEP

The major conclusion of the CAP experience is that treating Caribbean English Creole as a separate language from English works when teaching Creole-speaking students. Having students write in Creole using a standardised orthography seems to be a key factor in this success.

A corollary conclusion is that it is crucial not to underestimate the ability of students and their parents to understand and make use of sophisticated ideas about language. It is essential to go directly to students and parents with the idea that the two languages are different. This approach is much more effective than simply teaching the specific syntactic structures of English which differ from Creole without providing students with the theoretical framework they need to understand why they should bother learning them.

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APPENDIX 1: LOG ENTRIES FROM CAP'S FIRST YEAR

The decision to initiate a program for English Creole speakers at Evanston was made two months after the start of the school year. There was minimal preparation and planning time, and the program was taken on as a work overload by one teacher, who had a great deal of desire to see the program succeed, but only a hazy idea of what should be done. The first year was an experimental one, and one during which I think I learned more than the students did.

The following quotations from my log will give some indication of the types of successes, failures, and problems encountered during that first year.

November 24, 1986: First day. Lots of schedule complaints. Sherine and Steve don't want to stay in class past the quarter. Carl very negative and loud. Wants out. Carl antagonized Patricia with "Belize talk worse". Sherine jumped on for saying she talks better. Maxine brings Marlene after school to ask me to let her in class.

November 26: Talked about expectations and realities about America. Carl said he didn't want to be in class and that he wouldn't participate. Each person talked about self, ending with Carl.

December 1: Good participation in discussion. Carl still negative, refused to get a book to read. Carl seems to have nationalist feelings about the class and about me teaching it. Talked to him briefly later in the day. Friendlier.

December 3: Carl very negative and disruptive again.

December 4: Finished and discussed levels guide. Ardine followed too much. Desmond did his own thing too much. Had to speak to Carl (repeatedly) and Chris and Desmond to be silent. Listened to Miss Lou on "corrupt – derive", notes on definition of terms, plus English is derived from Anglo-Saxon and French; Caribbean Creole is derived from English and African (Twi). Carl cooperated. Said defiantly "I won't change my speech. I'm a Jamaican and I won't change it." Promised to discuss that tomorrow.

December 5: Discussion of do you want to speak patois or American or both. Good, constructive. Listened to two Miss Lou poems. Desmond, Chris especially "antsy". Two periods of discussion is too much.

December 10: Field trip, excellent! [this was a tour of Chicago] Sherine actually spoke patois on the way home. Everyone welcomed it in good humour.

December 11: Did worksheets. *Ardine*. Desmond very slow.

December 15: Map work went well. Put Desmond out for talking. Good discussion with him after.

December 16: Group work. One group: good; second group: had to struggle for cooperation; third group: very slow to cooperate. Talked to individuals about problem classes.

December 17: Chris and Desmond ready to fight. Took time to talk to them. Okay. **!!Great discussion about differences in grammar creole/ American. See notes in curriculum folder.

January 7, 1987: Talked about pluralisation "s" vs. *dem*; went well. Carl, Chris and Desmond not cooperative about reading activity.

January 8: Review for geography test. high interest and participation. Carl worked on letter sounds with aide. Very good. Play reading. Everyone loved it, except Carl, who "read" a magazine, and Desmond who almost fell asleep.

February 20: We watched the Creole video [from *The Story of English*] this week and reviewed the discussion on "creole vs. standard English" Still lots of misunderstanding; lots of "town vs country" talk. Denial of creole: creole is just "street talk" etc. Some progress – more needed. Did well on plurals lesson and worksheet. Blow-up with Carl. Put out of class permanently to work with aide. Jeff [department chairperson] had to "strong-arm". Awaiting results.

Undated later entry: My plan now is to teach overall grammatical issues: plural formation (develop worksheets and use ESL chapters), possessive formation, verb forms (subject-verb agreement), verb tense. I have begun assigning silent reading at home with check-off sheet to be signed by guardian. After one and a half weeks, I have received back four of eleven. Also, I have assigned a weekly half page writing assignment at home. Nine students have done at least one, two students have done two.

Undated later entry: Asked for examples of figurative language:
"Fire de a mus-mus tail, im tink a cool breeze."
"We sweet you gwine sour you."
"Same han feed you e turn round bite you."
"Bush have eyes."

March 12: Advisory; introduced verb "to be" and present tense verbs.
"Why are we learning English in here?" Sherine
"This is a special class, isn't it?" Paul
Discussion ensued about why have this class. I said everyone is smart in this class, but some want to put you in special education classes. That's why I fought for this program. I talked about how you learn to speak by hearing people speak – gave examples from (my) baby. That caught on and interested the kids.
Point: you know the "right" way to say things without thinking about it by process of studying as baby.
When kids try to imitate another dialect, doesn't work: e.g., white kids say " he be riding now". What's wrong with that for Black English?
Kids (some) pointed out it should be "he riding". And if you asked "how does he get to work every day?" Kids: " he be taking the train".
"Black Americans have a different language" Chris
Then go to school and if teacher speaks the same way: easy! Who will find it easier to succeed, kid who speaks exactly the same way the teacher does, or the kid who speaks differently? etc.
Then introduced: I am we are
you are
he-she-it is they are
try "give": all said "give" all the way through: discussion. Put "s" after singular verbs (opposite of nouns).

This first year was a constant struggle with the students. The log entries show the degree to which motivation was an issue: there are constant references to behaviour and attitude problems. At the same time, there was some progress made in language learning by at least some of the students, despite a scattered, unfocussed approach on my part.

APPENDIX 2: CAP CLASSROOM TRANSCRIPT FROM 1988

The class in which this recording was made was a ninth grade class (the first grade in the high school), mainly fourteen-year olds. The students had been interacting with the CAP language curriculum for over a month before this day, and were enthusiastic about it.

October 12, 1988, 6th period:

The teacher begins the class by introducing the idea that all languages have rules, and these rules are called grammar. She points out that grammar does not fall from the sky, nor is it decided by the people that write the dictionary or any other authorities. It is written down by people who have studied the way people talk. She then shows the students a copy of Beryl Bailey's book *Jamaican Creole Syntax*, and says that it is a book of Jamaican Creole grammar. She continues: "We said before that all languages are equal: not one is better than another. It's the same with grammar; the idea is not that this grammar is better than that. We have standard English grammar and Creole grammar and they are different, that's all, because they have different roots and people speak them differently. I want you to give me some examples of the way you'd say something in Creole and the way you'd say it in English and we'll look at how the grammar is different."

There is a pause, and no student offers anything.

Teacher: What I'm asking you to do right now is difficult, and I know it's difficult. It doesn't come easy. Okay, I'll write a sentence in English and you tell me how it's said in Jamaica or Belize – and there are differences between the two places. Okay, it says in standard English "John is driving the car." How are you going to say that in Creole?

Student: Jan a draiv di kyar.

This is followed by giggles and lots of crosstalk, including the following interchange:

"*No – Jan de draiv.*" "*No – Jan a draiv di kyar!*"

(The teacher writes both student responses on the board, and continues writing student responses on the board throughout the class period.)

T: It depends what part of Jamaica you come from, or your parents come from. There are regional differences in Jamaica, and *de* and *a*

are one example. This is also a vocabulary difference from standard English, right? (The class had had a similar session on vocabulary differences between English and Creole a few days earlier.) Neither one of these words exists in standard English.

Lots of crosstalk, students trying out various ways of saying the sentence. One boy says "*Jan are draiv di kyar*." Other students respond with derision.

T: Actually, I think Kevin is getting at an important point. A lot of times when people are comparing Creole to standard English in their own mind, they try to find a word that resembles the other word. And a lot of sentences where you use *a* in Creole you might translate using "are". For instance, if you say "They are driving" you might translate it *Dem a draiv*, right? So a lot of people will think to themselves that *a* maybe is related to "are", that maybe it's the same word and they left the "r" off or something. But that's actually not the case. This actually comes from African. Okay, how about in Belize? How will you say this in Belize? Richard?

S: *Jan di draiv*

T: *di*? like "d"..."i"? Okay, the pronunciation is going to be a little different.

S: What's the "Be" for on the board?

T: What's the "Be" for? Belize. I put the "e" on because in my other classes I have kids from Barbados, so I have a "Ba", and in Barbados they would say it a little different, too. Okay, this is the present tense, right? John is driving the car right now. (Writes another sentence on the board: "John drives the car.") Now what does this one mean?

S: He's doing it right now.

S: There's a name for it!

S: It's a state of being.

T: John drives the car. It is something John always does, does it often, like somebody drives you every day to school, or to football practice. He might not be driving it this minute, but it is present tense. So, how are we going to say that in Creole?

S: *Jan draiv di kyar.*

S: *A Jan draiv di kyar. A Jan draiv di kyar.*

T: Okay, either way. *a* gives it more emphasis, right? What about in Belize?

S: *Jan alwiez draiv di kyar.*

More crosstalk and discussion, as students try out each other's responses.

T: Okay, what's the main difference in grammar here, in these sentences, between standard English and Creole?

S: In the Jamaican one they leave off the "s".

T: Okay, that's one way to put it. Another way to put it is that in English they add an "s". Okay? (She goes on to explain that it's important to realize that Creole is not made by leaving things off of English, because that carries the implication that English is better.) In Creole, you don't indicate present tense by putting something on the end of the word.

Teacher writes on board: "John drove the car."

T: What tense is this one?

S: Past.

T: Past. Good. Now how is this said in Creole?

S: *Jan wen de draiv.*

S: *Jan di de draiv.*

T: All right, there's another regional difference. Now, what if we say "John was driving the car"?

S: *Jan* was *a*

Lots of crosstalk.

S: *Jan ben a draiv.*

T: What if I say "*Jan draiv di kyar yesside*"? Without *wen a* or *ben de* or *di de*?

Students are laughing at the previous suggestion of "was *a*". Some are saying that is standard English. The teacher takes time out to explain the concept of a language continuum, that in the Caribbean there exist not only pure Creole and pure standard English, but also various mixtures.

T: That's what most of you are doing. As you are learning American English, you are speaking something closer to standard English, but still mixed with Creole. And that's what we're trying to do here: make a break between them, so you can use Creole and you can use standard English and you know which one you're using and when you're using it. In Belize, how will you say it? Can you think of it? (Pause) Sometimes it's hard to think of one language when you're thinking of the other. (Pause) Okay, how about "Richard rode the horse yesterday"? (picking a topic she knew Richard identified with)

S: *Richard raid di haas.*

T: How about Richard was riding, or John was driving?

S: *Jan nu di draiv.*

Much crosstalk. This was a new word to most Jamaican students.

T: What's the main part of speech that's different here? (Brief review of parts of speech.)

S: The verb.

T: Yes, and that's a big difference, because the verb is the core of the sentence; it tells you what's happening in the sentence.

The teacher explains that in standard English, you indicate time (tense) by changing the verb itself (e.g. drive-drove). In Creole there are two ways, one by adding a word before the verb, the other by adding another word that tells when the action happened (e.g. yesterday), but not by putting an ending on the verb. She points out that that is one of the major differences between Creole grammar and standard English grammar. Some languages add endings, others do other things.

T: So in your English class, that's one thing to look out for – when to put what ending on the verb. Now, let's take a look at plurals. In standard English you would say "two dogs". In Creole what would you say?

S: (several) *Tuu daag.*

T: Okay. (Pointing to the standard English phrase on the board) This is called repetition. Languages use repetition and some languages use it in some places and others in other places – kind of mixed up. In standard English, here, even though you've already said two you still add an "s" at the end of dog. You don't really need it, because if you say "two dog", it's clear you're talking about two of them, not one. In standard English, you put "s" on there. It's just a rule. You always do it. (Writes "dogs" on the board.) What about that one?

S: *Daag.*

T: Okay, but how are you going to make it clear that it's a whole pack of them? They're coming after you, and it's not just one. How are you going to make it clear?

S: *Di daag dem.*

S: *Dem daag.*

S: *Dem-de daag.*

T: Okay. There are various ways of saying it. This (pointing to *dem-de daag*) could be translated "those dogs" in SE. You can do it that way also.

S: Ms Fischer, can you ask us "the children?"

T: Sure.

S: di pikni

S: di pikini

T: Okay, in lots of pidgin and creole languages all around the world, it's the same word. It's actually from Portuguese. It's the same word in New Guinea.

S: pikini?

T: Mm hm. There are different pronunciations. It's a word in this country, too, but it's pronounced "pickaninny": they put an extra "n" in.

The students try out that word.

T: Okay, now in standard English you put an ending again. ("Children" on board) standard English has a whole bunch of ways to make plural. Some words you add "s", some "es", some you change, like "goose" to "geese", "tooth" to "teeth".

S: "mongoose" to "mongeese"

Laughter.

S: Ms Fischer, have you ever heard of *pikieri*? (from a Belizean student)

S (JA): pichieri

S (Be): pikieri More crosstalk and discussion.

S: It's a bird.

S: We're not talking about a bird. It's a little animal.

T: Like a guinea pig?

S: A wild boar

T: (pointing back to the blackboard) Anyway, once again, in standard English, you're changing the word, usually the ending, but not always, to make the plural. In Creole you're not changing the word. If you want to talk about more than one tooth, you say *tiit*. If you want to talk about one tooth, you still say *tiit*, right?

S: You put *dem*! If you're talking about more than one, you put *dem*.

S: Mi tiit a hot mi.

More crosstalk.

S (Be): Ms Fischer, in Jamaica, they talk real fast. They say their sentences broken. It's broken.

S (JA): I no brok!

S (Be): They talk too fast.

Lots of crosstalk. This conversation gets hot and heavy, and the teacher recedes from the centre of attention during it.

S (JA): *Dat bika dat di wie di wod dem . .*

S (Be): Ms, Fischer, you hear them talk about something like run on? Is it run on?

S (JA): *Galang gwan*!

T: That's for writing. When you hear about run-on sentences, they are talking about writing.

S (Be): No, but that's what I'm saying, it sounds like it.

T: I'll tell you something, though. If you're listening to someone's speech that you don't understand that well, but you understand a little bit, it's always going to sound too fast. Americans feel that Jamaicans talk too fast and Jamaicans feel that Americans talk too fast.

S (Be): You think Americans talk too fast?

S (JA): Yeah!

S (JA): Well, you can't understand them.

T: Now, the main lesson I'm trying to get across to you is that what's correct in Creole grammar is not necessarily what's correct in standard English, and what's correct in standard English is not necessarily what's correct in Creole. Okay? So, that means that when you're deciding that you want to speak and write in correct standard English, that you have to be consciously thinking about, concentrating on, what is the grammar?

This transcription indicates some of the complexities of the Caribbean-American classroom setting (and reveals some of the limitations in the teacher's grasp of Creole as well). However, the main thing it reveals, when compared to the notes from the 1986-87 school year, is the high degree of attentiveness and motivation on the part of the students. They were involved in the lesson to the point of frequently all talking at once. Everyone wanted to try out the different ways of speaking; everyone wanted to argue about which was the correct Creole form. Once again, what we are seeing here are students who are not pretending to be fluent English speakers, and who are learning English structures in the context of a positive reinforcement of their own grasp of their native language and its structures, something to which they had never given conscious thought before. The students are excited and the teacher is excited, and real learning is going on!

APPENDIX 3: STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF CAP

At the end of the 1988 school year, student comments reflected the impact of the new language curriculum (all student comments are reproduced as written):

> This class help us to understand the proper way of writing English. Because at time student from creole speaking country sometime mix both language.
>
> Before I came here, Creole was just something that was spoken by ordinary people. But since I have been in your class I have seen the importance of the language when spoken and written. I have realized that whosoever speak Creole must not be ashame of speaking it. I'm not.
>
> I think that this is a good class for the carribbean student. Because if many of the carribbean student were in this class there language would improve and they would be around other Jamaicans. And speak up more in class. To just be coming from Jamaica and to know no friends and to be in a class with your own Jamaicans make you feel comfortable. I think this class have done a lot for me ... My ideas change about creole because when I used to go to school in Jamaica. Most of the teachers always say why don't the student speak proper English. But it's not a matter of saying it's broken English. That's just how most of the people in Jamaica speak.
>
> My opinion about this class is good. When I just came here I took a hard time to understand and adjust myself to this country. But when I came to this school I get to understand creole and get to spell it because of this class. Creole in this class help me to write and read english know english better and appreciate my language much better.
>
> In this class I get more experience when I want to write and read english. Creole is derive from African and anglosaxon. Creole is our culture and we should learn to read and write it. I want to learn to write the language that I talk. I give credit to this class because it help me to write my language good.

In the 1989 student evaluation students responded to a series of questions. Some of their answers echo the 1988 student comments; some

show a more sophisticated understanding of the language issue. The following are two of the questions with selected, representative student answers.

Question:

What have you learned about Creole and English in this class?

Answers:

> I learned that Creole can be written.
>
> They are two different language and you are not to be ashame because you don't speak English.
>
> I learned that Creol should consider as a language, and not a dialect form of English. I also learn that Creol should be a written language just as English.
>
> I learned that creole can transilate in English.
>
> I learn in CAP class about creole and English that Creole is a very nice language it is not broken English it is a Creole it is not bad English nither I learn that every where people are not that much different.
>
> I have learned that Creole and English are two separate languages.

Question:

What are some good or helpful things about this class?

Answers:

> It helps you to feel more comfortable, because the students in the class speak your language, and so they are able to communicate with you. This class helps you to realize that creole is not English and is a language that is now being written.
>
> the class help teach us to transilate Creole into English and whenever we've got any problems, or anything we can go to our teacher and she will do her best to help us, my cap teacher always wants us to be happy, she also teach us about many different thing we didn't know
>
> It alows you to apreciate the language you speak. Allow you to distinguish the differents between each language to be able proform better in english class.

The class help people to speak English.
The teacher always understands. If you don't understand something they'll explain it. The teachers are very helpful.
It helped me to become more confiden in myself. it also helped me in my speaking and be able to communicate with my fellow student.
One good thing about the class is everyone feel comfortable speaking. For example if we were in a regular class it would be uncomfortable for us if we are trying to explain ourselves in English in mess up but in hear we can speak our language, and everyone understands it.
We relate our feelings openly.
The good thing about CAP is that we can ask any question and get a resonable answer.
It makes us feel at home.
We are one big happy family.

On the affective level, the verdict is in. The students generally do understand and accept the idea that Creole is not English. Consequently, as predicted, their level of motivation for acquiring English has risen. Also a consequence is their growing awareness and pride in their own language background, the awareness that Devonish asserted would be a necessary prerequisite for successful teaching of these students. A person who is confident in his/her native language is in a much better position (and frame of mind) to learn another, and this is precisely what we are seeing in CAP.

FOSTERING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN KIMBERLEY SCHOOLS: AN IN-SERVICE COURSE FOR TEACHERS

Joyce Hudson
Catholic Education Office

The speech of Aboriginal children in the Kimberley region of Western Australia is mainly an English-based creole, Kriol. In the past, educators in the main have tried to ignore it and focus on teaching standard English. In support of this, Aboriginal people in the Kimberley have declared their desire for children to learn English at school. Yet there is a confusion and many find it increasingly difficult to separate standard English from Kriol or Aboriginal English.

Linguists in the Kimberley have been slowly whittling away at the myths about creoles and education. Some of these are:

- ignore Kriol and it will go away;
- children learn either Kriol or English, so if you acknowledge Kriol in the school, English will suffer;
- if Aboriginal parents speak Kriol to their children instead of the traditional languages, it will help them learn English;
- as children get on in school, they gradually lose their Kriol.

In the Northern Territory there is at least one school with a bilingual program in Kriol and English. Some situations in the Kimberley could be linguistically appropriate for bilingual programs in Kriol and English but the following are some factors that have prevented it:

- Kriol is widespread and affects all school types – State, Catholic and Independent – and as students move between schools it could do more harm than good if all systems use different approaches.
- Aboriginal parents are strong in vocalising the need for their children to learn English so they can run their own communities and talk with Government officials. Any reference to acknowledging Kriol in school is usually seen as a move away from teaching English.

- There has been some opposition from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to developing a literature in Kriol.

Yet through the work of linguists, people in the Kimberley are now very aware of the presence of Kriol as a language and now it is sometimes claimed by those who want to identify as Kimberley Aboriginal people, even if they speak a dialect that differs from the main one. In many schools teachers are acknowledging the presence of Kriol and Aboriginal English among students.

The Catholic Education Office Language Team in the Kimberley has been addressing this issue and has developed an In-service Course that will inform teachers about Kriol and Aboriginal English and give them a process by which they can work out which aspects of English need focus for their students.

The In-service Course is called *Fostering English Language In Kimberley Schools* (FELIKS). This name reflects the main goal of empowering Kimberley students by teaching them Standard Australian English without denigrating their home language. It begins with some real examples of miscommunication between speakers of Kriol or Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English. It covers topics such as word studies; background to the three terms, dialect, pidgin, creole; socially appropriate use of language; phonology and grammar. In all topics the theory is accompanied by practical applications for the classroom.

FELIKS is being successfully trialled in Catholic schools in the Kimberley during 1992. It is an exciting project which attempts to provide an answer to at least some of the issues of creoles in education.

AUTHOR NOTES

Katherine Fischer is founder, program coordinator and teacher in the Caribbean Academic Program at Evanston Township High School near Chicago, Illinois, USA. Her interest in Caribbean English Creole and its relationship to academic success in an English language school setting began while teaching remedial reading to classes which included immigrants from the Caribbean at her high school. She is currently working on preparing materials which have been used in the Evanston program for publication.

Joyce Hudson is employed by the Catholic Education Office of WA where she coordinates the teacher linguists on the CEO Kimberley Region Language Team. She has led this team in developing the In-service Course FELIKS. At the same time she was seconded part time to the Ministry of Education WA to write the *Framework for the Teaching of Aboriginal Languages in Primary Schools*. Her interest in Australian Aboriginal Languages was developed when she spent many years in the Kimberley as a field linguist with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Since 1985 she has been employed by the CEO in Broome working on the development of curriculum materials related to Aboriginal languages and Aboriginal Studies. Her research interests are in applied linguistics, pidgins and creoles and the maintenance of Australian Aboriginal languages.

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